B. I. Haight,

1833.

THE RECTORY OF VALEHEAD.

Drawn by W. Purser. Engraved by J. G. Murray.

—"I must now soon expect my summons, and have accordingly, like a steward going to his account, been summoning up in my mind what I have received, and how spent."—

Page 308

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Earl

THE

RECTORY OF VALEHEAD.

BY THE

REV. ROBERT WILSON EVANS, M.A.

There sits a look of inward peace upon thee,
There floats a glow of innocence around thee;
Thou bringest airs of fragrant gladness with thee,
Like glorified saint, or angel fresh from bliss—
Can earth have homes so heavenly?

SIXTH EDITION.

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PREFACE.

THE plan of the little work here presented to the reader, may seem to require some prefatory statement. Its subject might have been treated in abstract in a regularly arranged dissertation; but little reflection, however, is necessary, in order to perceive that a formal treatise were but ill suited to its nature. The best part of the history of home, is made up of a multitude of minute and irregular incidents, which make their impression rather by their accumulation and unceasing action, than by their importance. Of these such a plan could not lay hold, much less turn them to their proper account; besides, a very large portion of the persons intended to be addressed, require their attention to be engaged by a much more popular mode of appeal. Upon these grounds, a

miscellaneous detail of circumstances appeared preferable. This affords a comprehensive and practical vehicle of instruction, and supplies, at the same time, to the subject all the popularity of which its dignity is capable. On the same grounds, likewise, the intermixture of prose and verse recommended itself to the author, and has been employed according as either dress seemed most adapted to the case in hand, the former best rendering the expression of the more common and regular routine of circumstances, the latter being more suitable to the pointing of those minute and uncontemplated incidents which are continually starting up and rousing our reflection. Miscellaneous as the appearance of his volume may thus be, the author trusts that he has obtained variety, and not violated unity of design; that all is uniformly directed to one object, and, through that, to the one great end, without which no deed is good, no thought is worthy, no affection is pure.

The subject has long appeared to the author to be too slightly dwelt upon by

writers. Amid the crowd of books which are daily issuing forth, directed to individual conduct, how few are they which notice the peculiarity of the Christian Home, essential element though it be of the great body of Christ, and cradle of the Christian's social graces. We, indeed, need to be reminded again and again, that it is a permanent congregation, assembled before God for mutual edification and for his glory,—that nature has done no more than the menial office of throwing its members down as stones in one heap upon earth. The hand of the builder is required to accomplish its high destiny, and put them together for everlasting in the wall of his Zion.

The high cultivation of mind in these days so widely prevalent, has created a very general interest in the beauties of natural scenery. This feeling being one of those which is increased by participation, and in itself of the most soothing and amiable kind, will be most intensely enjoyed in the society of home. It must be observed, however, that while, of all dispositions of mind, it

affords the most pleasing and most frequent channel to the entertainment of spiritual thoughts, yet, if undirected onwards to them, it will but foster a tendency towards natural religion. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The author, therefore, has been led, no less by duty than inclination, to bring it frequently forward, and turn it to its proper account.

What remains to be stated may now be left to the speaker of the following pages, who, in the Introduction and Conclusion, will give further information on the design of the work. It will here suffice to observe that the volume has been the result of short intervals of summer leisure, when the author found it absolutely necessary to throw aside all books, but could not remain quite unoccupied. Thus it is, as it were, a bundle of wild plants, which have sprung up in his fallow. May they have sufficient brightness of hue, and adequate sweetness of fragrance, to invite the attention of the passenger!

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

On being called upon for a third edition of this work, the author has been anxious to make such improvements as the time and his leisure would allow. In some places, therefore, he has made corrections, in others, expanded the sense of a passage by additions, and has inserted two new Chapters, which have appeared to him requisite to complete the plan.

The picture presented of a Christian home in the following pages may be thought scarcely capable of realization in ordinary practice, at least when the present state of society is considered. But, on the other hand, it must

be borne in mind, that, as our whole conduct of life should be a continued pressing on to reach a point of excellence, which the farther we proceed, proceeds also in advance farther into the regions of purity; therefore the person who undertakes to instruct must prepare a model, which, while approachable by various tempers in various degrees, shall be unattainable by any on the whole, otherwise it would fail to supply the necessity of the case, and cease, after a certain point, both to stimulate and to instruct.

CAMBRIDGE,
May 1831.

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THE

RECTORY OF VALEHEAD.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Several years have now passed since I officiated as the Minister of the parish of Valehead; the latter part particularly of the time which I spent there was, from circumstances which will presently appear, so fraught with instructive conversation, that, after having recurred to it in memory with increasing delight and profit, I am at last induced to commit to writing a register of my impressions, and only wish that I could, as once Xenophon to Socrates, do proper justice to the wisdom of my instructor.

The parish of Valehead is situated just where a wild and mountainous region meets a fertile

champaign country, with which it imperceptibly blends by the gradual opening of its valleys, and sinking of its hills. I have said parish, for village there is none, the houses being situated in the centre of their respective farms, and thus very prettily scattered with their white fronts, and half-screening orchards, over the face of the country. If, however, the term village be insisted upon, then we must apply it to a cluster of some five or six houses situated near the church, and forming those important elements, the residences of the lawyer and of the doctor, the ale-house, the smithy, and the shop. On the north side of the church, and opening into the church-yard by an old-fashioned gateway, whence issues to the chancel-door a narrow path, traversing the green in aristocratic solitude, stands the manor-house, an ancient black and white building, one-half of whose windows are bricked up, and the other presenting a sad unsightly contrast with what you immediately perceive must have been their former state, by having had their fine old mullions cut away, and the ugliest sashes of the manufactory class introduced in their stead. Nevertheless, it still presents a noble appearance, both from the beauty of its general outline, and from many of

its worst mutilations being concealed by a grove of venerable walnut-trees, which by some unaccountable good fortune escaped the proscription, or rather conscription, of their race during the late war. The church is sufficiently rude, pierced irregularly with windows of all styles, here with the narrow pointed slit, there with the broad mullioned square, and in its general outline exhibiting, in the usual style of this part of the country, a singular combination of the barn and dove-cote. It, however, often attracts the notice of the stranger as he passes along the great road, by being seen perched upon a green and sunny knoll, contrasting its white walls with the deep indigo of a precipitous mountain seen beyond. It stands in the upper part of a long vale, which a little farther up forks out into three narrow valleys, each bringing down its river. These flow in an united stream under the church-yard, crossed by a handsome bridge, and in the proper season the banks are dotted with anglers, who resort hither from considerable distances. The church-yard has ever been with me a favourite walk, independent of the train of thought which it naturally suggests; it is warm and sunny, and presents also a great variety of beautiful prospect.

Looking thence down the vale, your eye wanders over a rich and well wooded, though somewhat flat country, along which you trace for many a mile, by a succession of gleaming elbows and reaches, the course of the river, and, reaching the horizon, sees it indented by the towers and spires of the metropolis of our district. Looking upwards, your view penetrates into the three valleys before mentioned. One of these is shortly terminated, presenting a lofty waterfall at its upper extremity, which rushes, at one leap, over a bare ledge of slate-rock. The view up the two others is more extensive, but is gradually lost amid jutting promontories. In one, you can just discern the tower of its village church, and the knoll crowned by ancient fir-trees, which protect the village from its peculiar wind. In the other, the singular fall of the mountains shews at once the nature of the stream which waters it, the roar of whose waves I often delight in catching at the still of the evening. The whole horizon in this direction, in complete contrast to that in the other, is tossed like a stormy sea into waves of solid rock and mountain, of every variety of form and figure, some most singular and fantastic. On such of them as are near enough you may discern nicks and

furrows, denoting an old circular encampment, and sometimes the predominant figure of a turfy sweep is interrupted by a short and momentary swell, the tomb of some ancient warrior. Traces, indeed, every where present themselves of the possession of the country having been disputed inch by inch. The foreground is a rich combination of wood, meadow, and water, setting off to great advantage, by its lively verdure, the dark and rugged back ground. Accustomed as I have been from my cradle to beautiful scenery, I felt truly thankful to my God for this among other blessings, that he had cast the lot of my ministry in so fair a land.

With my parishioners, too, I had every reason to be satisfied. All my intercourse with them harmonised with the feelings, and satisfied the imagination, excited by the view of their romantic country. They were a plain, pious, and well-informed race; but this character, of course, I do not attribute to the nature of their scenery, though I am confident that this has more effect than moralists are generally inclined to allow; nor was I long in discovering its principal cause. Every where I found that a master hand in religious reformation had been before me. It was the operation of my last

predecessor but one, who had become a proverb in the mouths of the inhabitants, and was familiarly termed the good Rector. Though he had now been dead full twenty years, his works still remained, and his conversation had left a blessed fragrance behind. Among the usual effects produced by a pious Pastor, I found one very general, which I believe most difficult to establish, a habit of family prayer, and in most houses I saw still in constant use a short liturgy, with occasional prayers to be used under various circumstances, which had been composed by him. The elderly persons were proud to be able to mention any act of kindness which they had received from him, as if it had imparted a sort of holiness to them; and to have been baptized by the good Rector, conferred a dignity of character similar to that which formerly attended the pilgrim on his return from Palestine. He had, of course, the usual reputation of a great scholar, and, in this instance, if I may judge from the little which he has left, it was for once well founded. As far as I can make out, he appears to have formed an agreeable mean between the old school of divines of the Stuart period and the very modern. He seems to have had all the weight of learning

of the former conjoined with the ministerial activity of the latter. And though his sermons have too much of the old methodical hair-splitting divisions of firstly, secondly, and so on, they are far removed from more serious defects of that school; they are never barren essays, or vain speculative disquisitions, but lucid explanations of points of doctrine, enforced by most earnest exhortation.

A school-house and other buildings are more obvious, though far less precious, testimonies of his zeal. Among these is one which is always duly pointed out to strangers by the sexton, who is the more proud of it, because it shews his late beloved master, he thinks, in a new character, that of a poet. It is a stone seat near the chancel door, so situated that the person sitting there sees a distant waterfall just over the sun-dial. He used to be much delighted in contemplating this quaint coincidence of two most expressive emblems of our fleeting existence, and on the stone has carved these lines, which the sexton, for fear you should not be able to spell, always reads to you with his fingers in the letters, and for fear of your having a short memory, always repeats twice over.

"Sit down awhile, this scene survey,
'Twill help thee in my church to pray."

His residence was the manor-house before described, which was his family property, as lay-Rector of the parish, the living being only a vicarage.

It was on Sunday, August 14th, 1825, (I love to note the very day to which I owe so much,) that I was surprised at seeing a perfect stranger pass up the aisle, and enter, as one well accustomed to the place, the pew in the chancel appropriated to the manor-house. He gazed for a few moments, with an earnest look on the monuments which covered the wall above, in every variety of style, from the kneeling alabaster figures and cushions of Elizabeth and James, down to the plain marble tablet of George III. He seemed upon the verge of seventy, and his face possessed that peculiar look of mild resignation, which sorrow, turned to good account, ever produces. His voice too, when I afterwards spoke with him, came with that softness, which leads one to imagine, that sorrow has physically no less than morally softened the heart, and relaxed all the rigidities of the passages from the breast to the lips. He turned out to be the sole surviving child of the

good Rector; and, contrary to the advice of his friends, who thought his feelings scarcely adequate to the trial, had returned, after fifty years, to spend the summer months at his native place, where, by removing some rubbish of the farmer's, and opening some windows long blocked up, he had fitted up two or three rooms very comfortably. He told me that the greatest shock which he had experienced, was on that morning at church. On opening the pew-door he involuntarily started at its emptiness, and, in the corner, where his mother always sate, he found her prayer-book lying still, though tattered and mouldering. He spent with me the remainder of that day; and I afterwards saw very much of him, nor did I ever leave his company without the consciousness of increased information. The fruits of my intercourse with him I now offer to the public; and regret that the office of registering example and advice so excellent, should have fallen into hands so inadequate.

Before concluding, I ought to say something of the poetical pieces interspersed in this volume. Many of them are, of course, component parts of the family liturgy, and proceeded chiefly, if not altogether, from the hand of the Rector; others from different hands of the

family; and, among these, some from him of whom I have a moment ago been speaking. He gave me this account of them: "Their composition was not altogether the whiling away of an idle hour; it served me for something of a higher nature than mere amusement, since the constraint of verse obliged me to turn the leading idea, and view it in every possible light, to pursue it into all its bearings. Thus I arrived, as from the porch to the sanctuary, at thoughts and objects of meditation, which had otherwise never presented themselves, and the less so in proportion to the holiness and loftiness of their nature; and, besides, I found that I thus concentrated, and called home to their due service, a crowd of ideas, which had else floated about loose and unemployed, and served rather to perplex me than to inform. I consider, therefore, each of these little pieces as the clinging and twining of my mind round some subject, which it would fain not dismiss until it had attained the angel's blessing!—May it have so attained! They are now precious to me as the tokens and sensible relics of past and blessed moments;—may they be precious to you as the results of a fellow-creature's experience."

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSTITUTION OF A CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

I had not long enjoyed the acquaintance of my venerable friend, when he began to unfold the habits and opinions in which he had been brought up. I had been observing to him the method and regularity which distinguished the older families of the parish, attributing it, where I believe it was entirely due, to the exertions of his father. "My father," he said, "was thought to entertain peculiar notions on the subject by most of his neighbours. But my experience has convinced me that they were not only sound in doctrine, but replete with benefit in practice. The turf here is soft and dry, and we have a delicious prospect to amuse our eyes. Let us sit down for a short time, and I will detail to you some of the doctrines and traditions of our

little church, for so my father delighted to term his domestic circle."

He maintained that society in general, as established on the principles of our nature, and still more the church, as based upon the feelings superinduced by the Gospel, was like those perfect bodies in unorganized nature, which, however you divide them, and however far you carry your division, still present, though on a lessening scale, parts similar to each other, and to the whole. Thus, as in one case, we divide kingdom into provinces, province into districts, district into families, each under their respective heads of king, governor, lieutenant, father, and each a model of the preceding; so, too, may we divide the universal church into national churches, national church into dioceses, diocese into congregations, congregation into families, each an epitome of the preceding, and collected under its proper head, as under Christ, under chief bishop, under bishop, under minister, under father. And as the subject maintains connexion with his king through the links of society above mentioned, so the individual with Christ through the corresponding bonds of the church. He cannot for a moment consider himself isolated and independent of the next link above

him, his family, nor that family deem itself unconnected with the next superior bond, the congregation. From this view of the case he shewed what an important element a family was in both societies, natural and spiritual, and if in the former system it was reckoned by the heathen a portion so significant that he assigned to it peculiar deities and peculiar rites, what ought we to think of its value in the latter? In both cases it is the concentrated spot of those motives, the place where that bias and impulse is given, the cradle of those affections and principles which, from their intensity here, proceed beyond the threshold, arrive in proper vigour at the wider circles of public life, and there, uniting with the corresponding energies of other families, bind together the mass of society, so as to become solid as the congealed surface which originates from a number of centres, shooting forth their raying needles, and interlacing till they form one uniform surface. God has himself determined its importance in his church. For as in that he has declared his sense of its dignity and holiness, by appearing in it amid signs and wonders, with the blazing mountain, the host of Angels, the voice of the trumpet, and the sound of words, unendurable, from the

terror which it inspired; so in this, in this lesser Zion, he has assured us of its sanctity, by manifesting his presence in it with a softening of his glory in beautiful accordance with the calmness of domestic life. Who has not felt his bosom burn within him when he reads of his abode in the house of Lazarus, and finds him weeping with those that weep, comforting the afflicted, and dismissing the penitent in forgiveness?

It is truly delightful at times to take off the eyes from the direct view of the painful splendour of the universal church, and to contemplate it through this soft and attempering medium: the perception is then accompanied with those vigorous and elementary feelings of love and warmth of heart, which are too apt to become vague in attempting to comprehend the vast proportions of the other. Let us for a moment indulge in the contemplation.

In the venerable head of the family we acknowledge its bishop, its centre of unity, source of faith, object of obedience. Of him the flock is both naturally and spiritually born, and fed with the necessaries of this life, and of the next. He is to them the conservator of the oracles of God; he is the entrusted minister of Christ.

His blessing confers the good of the world being, and of the world to be, and his cursing is a condemnation both now and hereafter. He is ever in his diocese, every day, yea, every hour, visiting and inspecting his flock, encouraging the obedient, chastising the froward, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, comforting the mourner, instructing the ignorant, interceding in prayer. He has, too, his priesthood in the elder members of his family, who assist and relieve his labours by their attention to the younger, who surround, as faithful stewards and ministers, his chair in his administration, and his altar in his devotions. Oh! high indeed is his claim, lofty his privilege, and tremendous his responsibility to the church of God.

It has likewise its appropriate liturgy, expressive of its peculiar circumstances; holds its appointed days of fast and festival, commemorative of the various events with which God has been pleased to visit it; and has its canons, which, though not reduced to writing, are thoroughly understood and cheerfully obeyed.

Nor wants this little church its catalogue of saints: such, perhaps, is some gentle, affectionate member, possessed of the blessed privilege of winning all hearts, whose modest talents

were unweariedly exerted in healing the sores of domestic contention, into whose ear was poured the secret of the grieved and burdened heart, and from whose lips were expected and received the words of advice and of comfort, to whose piety they seemed to feel indebted for the blessings which visited them, in whose existence all appeared enwrapt as in their joy, their prop, and their stay, the bitter example of whose calmness and resignation they were doomed to witness through long and protracted sufferings, whom at last they laid in the grave, premature in years, but mature in godliness, whose existence among them seems now as the visit of an angel whom they had been entertaining unawares, whom they cannot persuade themselves even now to suppose that they have utterly lost, but conceive to hover about the once beloved abode, and shed a hallowing protection upon its inmates.

Nor, alas! is wanting its catalogue of martyrs, of those who spent with unwearied toil, and wrung at heart by being continually foiled by some whom they love most dearly, in their unceasing endeavours to keep together their little community, and maintain it against the inroads of a pitiless and profligate world, and gallantly

bearing up to the last, bound, as it were, to the stake, fell at length, and sank into an untimely grave, rejoicing and blessing their crucified Master in that he had imparted to them strength and courage for the combat, and confident in hope of what to men seemed hopeless, namely, that he would in his own good time put the finishing crown to that which, under his assistance, they had begun.

Nor is it exempt from the failings of its great model, for it comprehends the bad with the good, the hypocrite with the faithful, and it too has its schismatics and heretics; it too has those who despise its salutary control, spurn its paternal restrictions, and assert their liberty by fomenting dissentions within, and, finally, drawing off a party in open revolt from beneath the fatherly roof, set up a separate and rival household, and bring the whole family into disrepute before a cruel and unthinking world.

Holding these opinions on the constitution of a Christian Family, the good Rector was accustomed to express himself with feelings of exceeding awe upon his double responsibility as father and minister, and would repeat again and again, as continually lying upon his mind, the passage of St. Paul, where he observes that the

person who is inefficient in the management of his own household, is also unfit for government in God's church. He was unceasing in urging npon others the sanctity of home, the sin of undervaluing that which has more than once comprised the whole church of God, and such as undervalued he asserted to be as incapable of understanding the nature of that church as the person ignorant of syllables is of reading its records. He would, therefore, pray and entreat of fathers of families to take heed to themselves how their behaviour affects the church of the Christ and God : for that they too are masons in that glorious fabric, and however inferior, yet of vital importance ; and if their part of the wall be loose and uncemented, how dare they arraign a superior mason, whose functions, embracing this part in a still more extensive range of duty, have been hindered by his neglect. And he called upon each member of a family to reflect upon the exceeding guilt of family dissention ; for that it was not only a violation of natural affection, not only a breach of Christian charity, but also a rent in the glorious vest of the church of God, and that, if in a lower degree of effect yet not of guilt, they were schismatics. He told them that a family thus divided, was

incapable of real union with the church; for how could they be united without, who were disunited within; how could they lay their gift upon the altar who were unreconciled with their brother; how could they in public prayer arrive at any holy conclusion, whose unholiness interrupted their domestic devotions. No! be assured, he would say, that in this case you are virtually cut off from the church of God; you are stones which have rolled out of the wall of the spiritual Zion; you are branches which the sap from the main trunk of the vine refuses to visit; you are sheep to whom the shepherd will not open the door of his fold.

Oh! great, unspeakable, is the blessedness of a godly home. Here is the cradle of the Christian; hence he sallies forth for encounter with the world, armed at all points, disciplined in all the means of resistance, and full of hope of victory under his heavenly leader. Hither he ever afterwards turns a dutiful and affectionate look, regarding it as the type and pledge of another home; hither, too, when sore wounded in that conflict, he resorts to repair his drooping vigour; here, when abandoned by the selfish sons of this world, he finds, as in a sanctuary, the children of God ready with open arms to

receive him; and here the returning prodigal, enfolded in the embrace of those who know not, dream not, of the impurities of the world with which he has been mixing, feels all at once his heart burst with shame and repentance. Merciful God, what a city of refuge hast thou ordained in the Christian home!

A truly Christian home can scarcely be said to die: it may disappear from the eyes of flesh, but its better parts, those which alone are truly valuable, belong also to our everlasting home. It has but to throw off the elements of flesh, and it becomes at once that spiritual home to which eternal bliss is appended. All its occupations are preparations for another life, all its actions converge to that point; its society is a lively figure of that in heaven, and its bonds of union, though originating in the flesh, have long ago been advanced and established in the spirit. Its inmates regard each other as companions of the life to come, and deride the power of any separation which this world can effect. They look with contemptuous pity upon the miserable expedient for union after death to which worldlings resort, the laying up their bones in a costly vault; thus making a mockery of home by a disgusting assemblage of mouldering ske-

letons. Being one in spirit, whether in the same grave, or with half the world between, they are still in union.

Such was the account given by my friend of his father's opinions; and ever since arriving at this view of a Christian family, I have regarded with indescribable interest the meeting of my congregation on the Lord's day. I see family after family trooping in, each in itself a little church, perfect in its organization, standing in peculiar relation to God, and now merging, by the unity of one altar, one faith, into a nobler and larger division of Christ's body. It presents to me a lively image of that universal body in which all churches, past, present, and to come, are comprehended; and of the several portions which compose it. Here, I have thought, as a family knot advanced in shewy pomp, followed by liveried lackeys, here is a church insolent with prosperity, and, like that of Alexandria, inviting by its overweening pride the chastising rod of its Master. Methinks I can almost hear the awful words pronouncing, "Repent, or I will come unto thee quickly." Another group, evidently in good circumstances, but clad in mourning, recalls to my mind the flourishing church of Carthage weeping over her

Cyprian. Another arrives, modest in behaviour, plain yet neat in dress, walking arranged in order before their parents; and I think of the golden days of the church of Ephesus, when the rod of persecution was still impending to chastise any trespass beyond the bounds of sober simplicity and meekness, and she had not yet learned the insolence of prosperity. A fourth arrives, and by its tattered habits, and squalid countenances, in which ignorance and stupidity are strongly pictured, presents to my imagination the present church of Constantinople, bowed to the dust, no less by its own superstition than by the sword of the infidel. Thus I cast a rapid glance through the Christian church, and conclude by arriving at the consummation of all things, at that great day, when there shall meet in congregation before the throne of our Lord, churches, and nations, and families of different ages, different tongues, different quarters of the earth, and all be gathered into one great family; and father, king, and bishop shall all merge into one title, and be ascribed with all honour and glory to the universal head, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

A HOUSEHOLD HYMN.

Blest was the pious Gittite,* blest,
Who worthy deem'd to entertain
Jehovah, Lord of Hosts, as guest,
Brought Abraham's† blessing back again.
There Heaven outpour'd
His blissful hoard,
And made the hymning household bright
With radiance of eternal light.

But doubly blest that shall restore,
Thankful amid a thankless race,
The blessing Mary‡ won before,
Her heavenly visitor replace,
Beaming among
His old and young,
Confess'd in holy good and fair,
Shall find his God sojourning there.

There the tear-wasted cheek is dry
Beneath the smile of healing Heaven;
There to the host's repentant cry,
The guest responds, "Thou art forgiven."
There at his feet,
In reverence meet,
Prone as the suppliant household lies,
"Thy faith hath won," the visitor cries.

---

* 2 Sam. vi. 10, 11. † Genesis, xviii. ‡ John, xii.

HOME.

Where does the heart, long lost to ease,
  Chill'd by disgust, awake to shame,
And like the extinguish'd taper seize
  Fresh being from its neighbour's flame:
And flying the polluting crowd,
Where good is mute, and evil loud,
  Its 'wilder'd thoughts arrange;
And 'mid the calm, like Hermon's dews,
Which holy breasts around diffuse,
  Confess a hallowing change.
In home, blest home: of good and fair,
The healthiest, brightest fount is there.

Where, like the house long worn with pest,
  Its jealous gate again unclose
To every fond returning guest,
  And smiles replace all former woes:
And scar'd no more by loathsome sin,
Angelic forms come trooping in,
  And martyr'd saints of yore
Unfold their lengthening trains of light,
(Far different speaks to them the sight
  Of cross* upon the door.)
In home: in her secluded cell,
The healers of the bosom dwell.

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* At the time of the plague in London infected houses were marked with a cross on the door.

There is that spot, so singly blest,
  Like that the Patriarch found of yore,
Where Heaven's all-radiant staircase prest,
  And files of climbing angels bore:
Thence launch'd upon the bosom's wing,
Prayers to the gate of Heaven spring,
  And ever as they rise,
Encounter blessings in descent,
And Faith, and Hope, Joy, Peace, Content,
  Come gleaming from the skies.
No dreamer's bliss, O home, is thine,
We touch the substance with the sign.

The day with pure communion fraught,
  There brings the heart, at evening's close,
A glorious harvest-home of thought,
  Unearthly dreams for night's repose.
And mounting its aerial throne,
Frames worlds, founds empires, all its own,
  And each most good, most fair,
But purg'd from every earthly stain,
From shame and sorrow, guilt and pain,
  Arrays concentered there:
Joys on its inward stores to gaze,
And revels in the boundless blaze.

Suns without scorching rouse the lark,
  Moons without striking fill and wane,
Seas without tempest waft the bark,
  Man without slaughter meets with man.

Youth flies, yet age is distant far;
Age comes, nor death is near to mar
  Uninterrupted bliss:
The past is seen without a pang,
No clouds upon the future hang,
  To-day is paradise.
O blessed home! the bliss man lost
Still strews in wrecks thy favour'd coast.

My soul, ascending as I think,
  Then hastes to disembodied bliss,
And pois'd on matter's ridgy brink,
  Pores upon spirit's wide abyss,
And tiptoe standing, vaults to free
The last hold of mortality;
  Thence, twinkling far behind,
Leaves sluggish matter's last faint star,
And stands within the golden bar
  Of everlasting mind.
Such visions home presents to view,
And home will give the substance too.

Thus to that sphere my spirit's flight
  Mounts upward, where beginning, end,
Past, present, future, all unite,
  All one harmonious vision blend.
Man's reckless hate, God's anxious love,
His cross below, his throne above,
  Sins utter'd, sins forgiven;

Man's plaintive dirge, heaven's trumpet-cry,
Our grave on earth, our home on high,
  Lost Paradise, gain'd Heaven;
All in one moment press'd I see,
My home is in eternity.

O thou great fount of thought and light,
  To mortal mind that givest wing,
With inextinguishable might,
  Up to thy crystal vault to spring;
And smilest as thou see'st it climb
The flaming walls of space and time,
  The baby of the skies;
And ever towards thy sapphire throne,
With beauteous forms allurest on,
  Despite of falls to rise:
Come with thy fiery pillar, come,
O guide my wandering spirit home.

CHAPTER III.

THE FAMILY LITURGY.

On calling one morning upon my friend at the Manor-house, he received me in a room which I had not seen before. It had all the appearance of having been a library; its fine bow window still retained in its upper part some panes of stained glass, and a few ancient-looking books still lingered upon the shelves, which, surrounding the room, left but space enough over the chimney-piece for a cuckoo-clock. On one side of the fire stood a high-backed arm chair, corresponding with which, in massiveness and size, was a table, at which my friend was sitting. The whole scene, not excepting the inhabitant himself, carried the mind half a century back. He appeared deeply engaged in a reverie over some papers, and beside him lay

what appeared to be a family-bible. I was on the point of withdrawing when I caught his eye, and he cried, "Nay; come in, my friend: so far from interrupting my business, you promote it. You are one who like to hear my tales of old times, and this is one of my retrospective days. On such I always sit in this room, which, beyond any other, is associated with the past. It was the cradle, as it were, of my mind; for it was my father's study, where he used to teach us, and served, moreover, as the family chapel. Yonder clock sounded the hour of morning and evening prayer; that arm-chair was his seat, or, if you will, his throne, on which he presided amid his little church; and these MSS. consisting, as you perceive, partly of loose leaves, partly of fixed, contain our family liturgy, as drawn up in my father's hand. The fixed leaves include the more general prayers, which were therefore of daily use; the loose the more particular, which therefore varied with the occasion. The preservation of these last is owing to a custom of my father's, who always had the prayer written out, and shewn among the family, before he offered it up; that by this means all hearts may be prepared to follow in unison. I have just arranged it as it must have stood

forty years ago, and am now enjoying the retrospect; and I thank my God and Saviour for giving me a father who so ordered our ways, that I can find the purest and sweetest enjoyment in what to most is a source of regret, if not of remorse. Every circumstance here expressed or alluded to, has been the cause of some spiritual working in our family; and its effect is now being felt in another world. It thus bears an importance in my eyes far beyond such as affect empires: and it refers me also to Him, with whom are resting those blessed spirits whose society I am longing to rejoin; and am fluttering and beating the wires of my cage, as I see them around me in liberty. Well! I was among the eldest of our earthly family; shall I complain if I am the youngest of our heavenly?"

Then suddenly changing his tone, he continued. "I have already detailed to you my father's notions on the constitution of a Christian family. With these his views of domestic prayer were in strict accordance. Prayer, he maintained, consisting, as it does, of petitions upon wants felt; thanksgiving upon blessings experienced; confession of sins committed; and humiliating acknowledgement upon their

chastisement, cannot deal in generals: it must enter into all the particularities of the situation of the offerer: it must as much distinguish him from any other, amid the vast multitude bowed before the throne of God, as his features and person amongst the assemblages of men. Thus the liturgy of any particular church will express, and allude to circumstances by which it differs from every other similar component of Christ's body; and the prayers of a family, in like manner, fix its identity in the class to which it belongs. On this principle he strongly disapproved of the exclusive use of general formularies of prayer for families, as confounding what ought to be kept essentially distinct. I say the exclusive use, since they can supply but one out of the two parts of which such prayer should consist; namely, that which represents the family in its general relation as a portion of a larger body. The other, which denotes the family as a body in itself, assuredly not a less important division, they altogether omit. He was therefore careful to make our prayers bear upon the peculiar circumstances of the family, reflect its individual character, spiritual and temporal, for better or for worse. For example, had any member offended against the peace of

the family? After his submission, which ever indeed quickly followed, his confession was inserted by name amid the general confession, and his pardon humbly entreated from the Almighty Father. Was any one sick? We specially prayed for his restoration, and for hope and patience to sustain him. Was any one absent? He was earnestly recommended by name to God's holy keeping. Thus did my father, like a faithful steward, daily present before God, an account of the household entrusted to his care. How scrupulous and accurate was that account, I leave you to gather from this collection. To a stranger, and at this distance of time, some of the incidents may seem trifling; but in cases of the heart, especially when laid open before God, my father deemed nothing trifling. It is affected but by detail; and I have reason to know, upon the result of fact, that these were not trifling. I place before you our service of prayer as it stood forty years ago. Here is my name inserted among the absentees, (the assembled family never beheld me again;) and here is a prayer for the health of a sister, (she has long joined the blessed.) But here follows a more minute (perhaps you may call it trifling) mention of particulars: thanks for the

pleasure and profit received from the visit of a friend of the family—and were such prayers fruitless? No; that visit was felt in effects by our family, which are alive in me at this hour. We had, I might almost say, been entertaining an angel unawares. But even at the time, when such effects were not present to our view to give it importance, the mention of minute circumstances was rescued from the least appearance of trifling, by the turn which my father always gave it; pointing out its due connexion with things of greater dignity, and imparting to it a share of their importance. Nor did he disregard the effect of forms, which none but the unthinking can deem trifling. As an instance, observe how he broke part of our liturgy into responses, and in these responses has laid the petitions for domestic union, and thus pledged us before God to maintain it. Nor did he think the physical effect of our voices being in concert on such an occasion altogether insignificant.

Need I say how guarded must have been the conduct of every individual in such a family, how quick their self-discernment of any weakness, how immediate their mastery of any burst of undue passion; they lived before one another

daily in the sight of God; to him and to each other all hearts were open; there was a mutual spiritual as well as bodily knowledge, a sympathy and bond of love established not only in the visible world, but also in the invisible. We were all one; there was no reserved and sullen member among us; none with his private care devouring his heart, and dismaying the rest with looks of unaccountable gloom—all was frankness and openness of heart, and God was among us with all the illumination of his peace and gladness.

He then put the MS. volume into my hands, desiring me to peruse it while he attended to a person who had called upon business. Never before was seen so affecting a history of a family; a history, too, not written for the eye of man, but actually told out at the throne of God. It was a register of circumstances which were not of mere earthly occurrence, and so had passed away, but had been means also of spiritual communication with heaven, and in their effects immortal. It was a complete series of the bounty and the chastisement, of the joy and the sorrow, by which God had ordered their going. I saw the different stages of their journey, as this chosen family moved through this

wilderness below to the promised land of rest; and oh, methought, that every family would duly take warning by that registry which God hath caused to be kept of the prototype of all families, and see its fate in that of the house of Israel, remembering that they see there the dealings of God not with a nation only, but a family also. In turning over the pages, I perceived that this family, like its model the church, had its peculiar days of commemoration for blessings or for chastisements. Among these, I found the marriage-day of the parents, the birth-day of each child, anniversaries of recovery from dangerous sickness, and also of the final release of some member from this world of trouble. Thus the whole earthly history of the family was run through in the course of the year, the memory of God's dealings with them constantly kept alive, and a grateful sense of past mercies was continually preparing them for the reception of new.

On his return, my friend resumed. From this cradle we came forth into the world, strong in principle, inured to reliance upon God, and with no slight acquaintance with the human heart, which we had derived from our habitual unreservedness, and were thus spared the disgust

and corruption by which such experience is so dearly bought in the mart of the world. Life is a recurrence of similar occasions, varied somewhat in aspect, and all occasions at home having been met with the proper feeling and principle, and well noted and discerned by our system there, left us, on their repetition on a larger scale in the world, but little perplexity. Even when absent, we enjoyed to a considerable degree the comfort and protection of home. Is it nothing to be assured that we are the object of continual prayer? Is it nothing to know that at a certain hour we are joining our prayers with others, and are united at the foot of the throne of God? Besides, we often enjoyed its holy influence in a manner quite incidental and indirect. Well do I remember how, when once upon the point of yielding to a very strong temptation, a clock struck the very hour of our evening prayer. In an instant, our family group appeared before my eye; I heard my name put up in humble and earnest entreaty to the Almighty Protector, expressions of our domestic liturgy flashed upon my mind with a vivid light, and I repelled the assailant with lively indignation, and felt as if I crushed it with the might of a giant.

I have since seen much of mankind, have been the guest of many families, and what I have observed in them has convinced me of the wisdom of the economy with which my father ruled his own. I have seen very many amiably united in the bonds of affection, but very few, alas ! in those of religion. In almost all, the serious thoughts connected with another life seemed studiously kept down in the bottom of the bosom, not as a treasure of which the owner was jealous, but as an occupant of which he was ashamed ; they seemed to be withheld as endangering the unity of home, not as confirming it, and that suppression of opinion which on any worldly matter would be considered disingenuous, was on this point industriously encouraged. Perhaps a sudden blow of misfortune came upon them, and they turned to God, but it was in stupor and amazement ; family prayer was established, but like the book of the law, found by Josiah, it was heard, after a long neglect, by untutored ears, and, unfortunately, there was always some one member of the family not in unison with the rest, one of whose inward satire all stood in awe, to whom the others were individually conscious of some folly or other, and fearful of his secret ridicule, and

imputation of hypocrisy, were either altogether deterred, or spent the time of prayer in thinking of him, and not of God; in fearing him, and not the Lord. Taken up with so faint a spirit, it could not last long; the presence of guests was enough to shame them out of it, and after several interruptions, which became stronger and stronger, and several revivals, which became weaker and weaker, it was finally dropped by a consent, which, however tacit, was apparently much more hearty than that by which it had been originally established. Few seem to be aware of the difficulty of setting on firm footing effectual family prayer, of the time which must elapse before each bosom can break through the prison of its reserve, and stand revealed to its neighbour, before it can reach that state of purity and confidence which fears no rebuke, experiences no aversion to confess, disguises not its wishes, and before the brother and the sister, the delicacy of the one, and the manliness of the other, find at last that common language which God had given, but the world had destroyed, before the same thing can appear in the same light to different minds, and what was formerly an object of levity and banter, can become to both parties a source of seriousness

and of anxious canvass. O, my friend, be assured upon my experience, that where religion is not predominant, there is no stable home, the joys of that house are but sources of future sorrow, its affections mere ropes of sand.

Here our conversation upon this point ended; before quitting him, I took copies of some of the poetical pieces of the family devotions, which I here subjoin.

I.

A FAMILY HYMN.

ALL.

Lord of that family above,
Where thou dost rule in might alone,
Eternal Sire! and angels move,
As children round thy burning throne;
Look on its type which now draws nigh,
With humble prayer and praise to plead,
And of the peace which binds on high,
Oh, pour some portion on its head.

FATHER.

O Thou, whose image I convey
Amid these suppliants, Father, hear,
Grant, as with fearful rule I sway,
Thee of all rule, great source to fear.

Correct this heart, this tongue chastise,
That whatsoever word shall fall,
May in their hearts to wisdom rise,
And turn them to the Sire of all.

CHILDREN.

O Thou, before whose awful seat
Ten thousand thousand seraphs bow,
Grant us with reverence due to meet,
And own this type of Thee below.
Round him in fondness as we cling,
To thee to bow both heart and knee;
Through him, of life the mortal spring,
Honour the immortal fount in thee.

ALL.

Thus humbly imitating here
Its holy prototype above,
Oh! may this earthly household bear
Some foretaste of its deathless love.
On thee each wish in union bent,
Bound in the bonds of spirit fast,
Here truly may it represent,
There join the original at last.

II.

THE MORNING'S WELCOME.

Welcome, my brother, from his hand,
That bursts, of sleep and death, the band;
This morn one earnest more supplies
Of morn when we in Heaven shall rise.

Brother! again we meet below,
More bliss of earth is still to flow;
Oh! in its beams may we improve,
And ripen towards the bliss above.

Brother! again on earth we meet,
Our trials yet are incomplete;
With hope for future, thanks for past,
May we endure and win at last.

Upon thy calm and sunny face
Thou bearest high communion's trace;
As Moses from the presence-throne,
Brought broken rays of glory down.

How still the breast, the heart how light,
That hath been lodg'd with him at night,
The good Samaritan; each wound,
Struck by the world his hand hath bound.

Heal'd each heart's bruise, sooth'd every pain,
On earth's wild wilderness again
We start; no robber's sword we fear,
His healing hand is ever near.

Oh then, this hour's unmingled balm,
The first-fruits of this holy calm,
To him let us prefer, and fall
Jointly before the Lord of all.

III.

THE EVENING'S FAREWELL.

Farewell! into his keeping go,
That builds all rest above, below;
Tho' far asunder eye and ear,
Lapt in his care, we still are near.

Tho' sleep and solitude surround
Our senses with unsocial bound,
Our spirits, in purest dreams upflown,
Shall meet before our Master's throne;

Together from that source above
Shall drink community of love,
Union of purpose, will, and mind,
Each thought, each wish in him combin'd.

And thus to troublous earth once more
We wake with renovated power;
And meet again, to stem the tide
Of world and worldlings, side by side.

Farewell! secure we lay us down,
His sheep that never lost his own,
His charge that strews his servant's bed,
Yet had not where to lay his head.

His name, blest giver of repose,
Shall our last mutual accents close:
Thankful for what the day has given,
We leave the night in hope to heaven;

And ponder, as we close our eyes,
How in the tomb he lay to rise.
Last upon thoughts and lips at night,
First may he be at dawn of light.

IV.

HYMN :—THE ALTAR.

An altar to the God of grace
I'll build, to him alone ;
And where shall be this altar's place ?
Lord ! where thyself hast shewn ;
Within the temple of my heart,
Within its inmost, holiest part.

And sacrifice I'll bring to thee,
The choice of earth and heaven.
And what the sacrifice shall be ?
Lord ! what thyself hast given.
I'll bring thee for thine altar's food
My Saviour's body and his blood.

And incense I will burn, whose steam
Shall reach thy starry chair.
And what wilt thou as incense deem ?
Lord ! what thou teachest, prayer :
Sighs, tears, and groans o'er follies past,
Faith, hope, and joy attain'd at last.

And offerings I will bring, of those
My utmost means afford,
And what the offerings shall compose?
What thou hast bidden, Lord!
Mercy to other's frailties shewn,
As thou hast mercy on mine own.

Thou that with Heaven's own flame of yore
Didst light Elijah's pyre,
Oh! down upon this altar pour
Thy Spirit's quickening fire.
Borne on its pinions to the skies,
May victim, incense, offerings rise.

V.

HYMN:—THE COMFORTER.

Where shall my restless spirit rove,
What realms in flight discern,
Nor meet, O mighty Lord of love,
Thy steps at every turn?
In every maze of wildest thought,
Heart's every devious wind,
Howe'er unstudied and unsought,
Thy glorious track I find.

I mourn amid the tedious night,
In dismal terrors pray;
And suddenly, with inward light,
Thou turnest all to day.

Friendless I wander and alone,
And world and fortune chide;
And instantly, O holy one,
Thou standest at my side.

I look sin's parted moments o'er,
And weep in angry shame:
Thou biddest me look on before,
And shout in songs thy name.
I look upon life's course half done,
And mourn its narrow date:
Thou say'st it is not yet begun,
And ne'er shall terminate.

I look upon the worm, and sigh,
"My brother and my peer:"
Thou dost to angels point, and cry,
"Behold thy brothers here."
I look upon the dust and say,
"My parent, and my home."
Thou bidd'st me gaze on endless day,
There dwell in worlds to come.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXTERNAL COMMUNION OF THE FAMILY.

When I left my friend, after the last conversation, I pondered upon its subject, and in order to indulge my meditative humour, took a considerable round instead of reaching home by the direct road. My way lay through a favorite dingle, but so enwrapt was I in my thoughts, that its beautiful features never once broke the thread of my contemplation; nevertheless, the consciousness of being there gave me animation and spirits, and I pursued my subject with unwearied activity. The result of my opinion was, that the religious economy which the good Rector had established for his household was so compact and complete in itself, drew the bonds of home so close that it would require more than the ordinary means to subdue a spirit of

religious exclusiveness, and maintain a proper communion with the church. As far as I had heard, their domestic worship began and ended with their own family, and they were in danger of considering themselves an isolated body, and of keeping aloof, like the family of Israel, amid the idolatrous heathen. As nothing could be more contrary to the Rector's notions on the constitution of a Christian family than such a tendency, I was curious to know by what counterpoise he had relieved it.

The opportunity of satisfying my objections soon occurred. On the very next Sunday, after service, my friend accompanied me on my way home from church. It happened to be St. Peter's day, and he began by complaining of the little interest which the congregation seemed to take in the observance of such days; they did not seem even to understand their nature or their purpose: for myself, he proceeded, I still retain, and trust that I ever shall, the strong impression which my father was careful to make upon our minds, of the importance of these pious memorials. They prevent that selfishness (for I know not how else to term it) which makes us think and act on religious subjects, as if the church of Christ were confined to our own

country and generation. They give, when understood, a catholicity of feeling to the congregation, exhibiting the links by which it is attached to the church of all ages and places. On this principle, as well as upon others, such days were ever observed with due diligence and solemnity in our family. This feeling indeed it was my father's anxious care to cherish at home. He turned our attention to brethren in Christ beyond the threshold, to spiritual fathers beyond the circle of home; he directed a portion of our prayers, first to the welfare of the congregation to which we belonged, and then to the welfare of the church of which it was a portion, and in every possible way put us in mind of our forming an elemeut in one vast body, whose condition for better or worse was felt through every member.

In addition to these means, he took care that we should be well acquainted with the history of the church. He did not think it right that we should for a moment imagine that nothing had happened in the church of God since the days of the Apostles, that we had received our faith immediately from their hands without any intermediate debt of gratitude and acknowledgement, that no trials had been undergone, that

no examples to animate our zeal, none to warn us of our weakness, had been set forth in its transmission, that the word of God, after a lapse of 1800 years, had come into our hands somehow or other, but how, and by whom, it was no more our business to inquire, than if it had fallen, like the Roman sacred shield, immediately from heaven; that we were a body in ourselves, indebted to no one, related to no one, without fathers, without brethren: such a state of feeling, he said, argued far too narrow a foundation of Christian principles. If, by shewing marks of reverence and affection for the memory of mortal men, from whose careful hands we have received the gospel, any one should imagine that he detracts from what is due (and the utmost which we can pay is due) to its immortal Author, is he prepared to carry this principle into common life, and hold himself exempted from all debt of gratitude to earthly benefactors, because they are but the instruments of God's blessings? He will not assert this, and on the same ground should not maintain the other. Our dear father, therefore, while he was unwearied in directing our attention to the supreme importance of Holy Scripture, and making us both understand and feel what it

teaches, would often devote an evening to at once instructing and amusing us by the reading of some record of the primitive church, and when such was wanting, as too often it was,* in our own tongue, he would translate from the original. I feel burning within me at this very moment, on the bare recollection, the devotional courage inspired into my boyish heart on the recital of the account of the martyrdom of Ignatius and Polycarp, and can recall the admiration and love which I felt towards the youth, and the maid who so courageously bore the cruel test of their faith in the persecution of the church of Vienne. Oh! how breathless would we hang upon our father's lips during such narratives: what zeal, firmness, and courage, we drank in; what exalted notions of the enduring powers of faith, and how earnestly did we long to obtain the armour of such faith. Our feeling was that of a young family of Christian heroes, full of the high spirit of our ancestry in the church, (for so we learned to reckon the martyrs,) determined never to lose or impair the rich inheritance which they had transmitted, and

* The Apostolic fathers were translated and published, with suitable notes, by Archbishop Wake. Would not our times encourage a reprint?

never to disgrace, when the day of trial came, so illustrious a lineage.

I cannot conceive, he would say, upon what principle, except upon an antiquated and unreasonable prejudice, Christians of the present day so generally shut their eyes upon the glorious list of examples exhibited to us by the history of the church. I much fear that such as are not under prejudice are swayed by indolence or downright indifference. Be the reason what it will, on such the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews assuredly did not act. What a sublime commemoration of departed worthies he has made in his eleventh chapter; his words come pealing upon the reader like the sound of a trumpet, summoning to the battle with the world: name follows name, and action succeeds action, like so many stirring notes, till he concludes with a strain which makes the heart leap. "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy;

they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth," &c. Yet how has this list been extended since his days; how much more magnificent is our retrospect. So glorious a procession never yet passed before the eyes of man; through a long and glittering line of martyrs and confessors, and just men made perfect, we arrive at the human form of the Captain of our Salvation, and bless and adore his Divine Majesty. And must we think it a duty to turn aside from the view, as if we were witnessing a splendid pagan spectacle, and to stifle the rising emotion, as if afraid of having our feelings entrapped by the imposing appearance? Yet, strange to say, the principal objectors to such contemplations do not object to the use of examples; they hold them up for imitation. But what are they? Are they men capable of exciting our interest, exalting our notions, instructing our principles, by being placed in situations which render immediately manifest the effect of each action, by being engaged in perilous times, by making most precious and yet most cheerful sacrifices of interests and affections, by encountering persecution, hunger, nakedness, and the sword? Far from it. They are, almost without exception, common-

place men, whose merit is the having acted as became them in common-place situations: they are men nursed up in our own easy and luxurious times, upon which the fiery breath of persecution has never blown: men unheard of beyond the narrow range in which they moved, who have left no impression on their age, but in sinking into the grave stirred a small and transitory circle, and then the surface of society became as if they had never lived or died. Surely, to look for imitation to models of so low and familiar a standard, is to narrow and debase our estimate of the Christian character, and leaves us unprepared, as far as they go, for those fiery trials of our faith which a good and prudent Christian will always expect, however he may deprecate their occurrence.

Such being the advantages of a knowledge of the brilliant examples which have gone before us, exalting as they do our minds above the surrounding common-place to which they are too apt to accommodate themselves, and linking us by a social feeling to the universal church, the setting aside particular days for the especial purpose of contemplating them, can alone ensure the requisite steadiness of view, and an effective earnestness of investigation. For

example, I take up, on this day, the character of St. Peter for my especial meditation, which, most probably, but for this notice of it by the church, I never should have done; at least, I should have rested content with the vague, transitory, and unpractical notions suggested in the course of turning over, amid a multitude of others in Scripture, the passages which relate to him. But now I turn it in every possible light, refer to the minutest incident, analyzing and composing, till I frame to myself an adequate conception of his character. I then examine myself by it, and review his ardent and courageous spirit till I imbibe some portion of it myself, and discuss his temporary fall till I arrive at a wholesome fear of my own weakness; and, on coming to his restoration, so completely do I feel identified with him, I rejoice and glorify his blessed Master, and my own, as if I had been restored together with him. And, last of all, I look intently upon that death which, according to his Master's prediction, he underwent, and prepare myself also to take up the cross of my Lord, and fear him, and not man. All these thoughts may have passed through my mind often before; but it was in a floating, undirected, unpractical mass, and not arranged as

now, in clusters, under suitable heads, tending to one definite end, and by the point given to them, leaving their impression distinct and deep both on memory and feelings. Besides, by thus steadily following one train, I am led, at last, to ideas on the subject, and combinations of ideas which had never before presented themselves; and I experience with the increase of my spiritual knowledge an accession also of mental wealth. At a due interval arrives another festival, the centre of attraction to another class of thoughts, which had else been too loose and vague to produce any impression; these, too, I fix in permanence. In this manner I am carried round the year; my views grow clearer, my resolutions more firm; such days are to me indeed holy days; in them I find a secure repose for my thoughts from the vulgar turmoil of the world around, to which I return at least refreshed, and, I hope I may add, improved.

Such were my father's views upon this subject, and such have I found their value; habituated to these, need I say that we extended our religious relations beyond the narrow circle of our family, that we considered our places in that family as the starting point of our actions, but not as their resting-place: that we looked

around, behind and before, and saw that we affected others, and by others would be affected; that we had succeeded others, and by others would be succeeded; and that to them we had relations extended, and duties owing as fellow-members of a society which extends through all ranks, nations, and ages. Solitary as I now am, being the last remnant of a numerous family, the survivor of relations and of friends, I am well able to appreciate this catholicity of feeling. It forms almost my only social stay; the past is to me full of gratification, for there I am in the company of the faithful servants of Christ, whose abode on earth it is so improving to contemplate; and there, too, I meet again with the dear inmates of a home which now exists but in memory: the present is full of comfort, for I feel a brother in every Christian I meet, and know that at that moment he is important to me, and I to him; and the future.....Oh, how glorious its prospect, in which I see myself united in one indissoluble body of the just and good, whom I have been in the habit of contemplating, and of the blessed spirits whose sweet communion I have enjoyed in the flesh, to our great and glorious head Jesus Christ, our Re-

deemer, who is the end of every thought, word, and deed.

My aged friend here earnestly grasped my hand, and returned on his way homeward.

I.

A HYMN:—THE MARTYRS.

We fought! but in no fleshly gear
We stood upon the field;
Our faith to us was sword and spear,
Our patience mail and shield.
Unaw'd we stood,
'Mid fields of blood,
'Mid mortal pang and dying groan:
Groan, pang, and blood were all our own.

We fought! and myriads stood around,
And echoing up to heaven,
From myriads burst the applauding sound,
But to our foes 'twas given.
Taunt, gibe, and jeer,
'Twas ours to hear,
And curse, and mockery, and mirth,
O'er every drop that stain'd the earth.

We fought! upon the sand as rain
Stream'd our big drops of gore,
And every drop was a seed-grain
Set in earth's fruitful floor.

From each blest spot
Believers shot,
Reckless to storms their stems reveal'd:
God's vineyard crown'd our battle field.

We fought! and opening to our sight
Heaven's radiant gates above
Unbarr'd the white-rob'd sons of light,
And him, our Lord of love.
In smiles intent
O'er us they bent;
Men mock'd our helpless solitude:
'Mid heaven's whole blazing host we stood.

We fought! a mangled bleeding load
Fell on earth's echoing bed;
But on the Protomartyr's road,
Untam'd our spirit fled.
In tracks of light,
Imprinted bright,
His steps shone beacons to our way,
We reach'd the gates of endless day.

We fought and won! and o'er the might
Of imprecating foes,
O'er pangs of feeling, pains of sight,
Triumphant, joyous rose.
No tear from eye,
From breast no sigh;
But, to the vanquisher of Death,
Hymns rang from our departing breath.

We fought, and won the Conqueror's crown:
But in no earthly bower,
Pisan, or Delphic cliff is grown
Its interwoven flower.
But bloomy plant
Of Amarant,
It nods o'er life's immortal stream,
Woos heaven's own breeze, drinks heaven's own beam.

We fought and won; no mortal eye
Pores on our trophied bust;
For to the sea, the wind, the sky,
They hurl'd our flaming dust.
Our Master gave
A viewless grave,
The Prophet's burial, who of yore
From Pisgah's height return'd no more.

We fought and won, a world the meed;
Not that, where unsubdued,
Into the conqueror's fortress speed
Sorrow's relentless brood.
But throne and seat,
Where 'neath our feet,
Sin and his hateful progeny,
Chain'd down in helpless thraldom lie.

We fought and won. O thou, whom yet
Flesh fetters with his chains,
Survey our freedom, nor forget
What purchas'd it, our pains.

Our cares, our woes,
Our wounds, our blows,
To thee were life, and light, and glee,
So do for those that follow thee.

II.

HYMN:—ON ALL SAINTS' DAY.

Array'd in vest of crimson die,
As one that hath the winepress trod;
Who art thou, say, that passest by?
Who these that hymn thee on thy road?

The world's full winevat I have prest,
And trampled in my fury there;
Blood is the crimson on my vest,
They spar'd not, and I would not spare.

All these my Saints, beneath the feet
Of earth's relentless tyrants lay,
And up before my mercy-seat,
Their cry ascended night and day.

I rose, I girt me in my strength,
My glorious armour round me cast;
Heaven flash'd thro' all its starry length,
Earth shook beneath my war-trump's blast!

With twice ten thousand angels bright,
Thousands of chariots in my train,
Shouting I rode unto the fight:
They sleep their sleep, who slew are slain.

O mighty Conqueror of the grave,
Captain of martyr'd armies thou,
O Lord omnipotent to save,
O King of Kings, I know thee now.

To the bright seats of rest on high,
Thou passest with thy saints along,
The blessed first-fruits of the sky,
Lord, may I join that holy throng!

III.

HYMN:—ON GOOD FRIDAY.

Prepare! the holy Prophet said,
Rise, son of God, the hour is nigh!
In dust a groaning world is laid,
Hell rears his shameless front on high!
In mortal clay
Thy limbs array,'
Uprise, thou mighty one to save,
Go forth, thou Conqueror o'er the grave!

The Son of God went forth, and lo!
Before his steps health's genial heat
Thrill'd the wide world of Spirit thro',
And flesh in vigorous pulses beat.
Hell's hateful door
Was clos'd once more,
Heaven's wells of bliss o'erflowing ran:
Such gifts the Saviour gave to man.

Prepare! the holy Prophet cried,
Thy Saviour comes, O man, prepare!
Be every duteous gift supplied,
Precious and perfect, rich and rare,
Thy guest to greet,
And at his feet
In penitent prostration fling
Thy will, thy passions, every thing.

And man prepar'd, the gibe, the jeer,
The scorn, the mockery, hate, and spite,
Words, looks, to wring the bitter tear,
The perilous day, the unpillow'd night,
The heart's keen ache,
When friends forsake,
The scourge, the thorn, the cross, the grave;
Such gifts man to his Saviour gave.

IV.

A REVERIE, IN LENT.

Methought in Salem's streets I stood,
And saw in long-drawn pomp pass by
An eager-visag'd multitude
That led a prisoner on to die;
And mock and taunt, and curses loud,
Rose deafening from the circling crowd!
But from the inner ring, that pent
The victim in, a deep lament
Now fill'd the curse's interval,
Now in shrill shriek rose over all.

By me the drear procession sped;
Tottering beneath his cross, and smear'd
With gore around his thorn-crown'd head,
The Saviour of the world appear'd.
And as he past, on me he laid
A steady searching glance, which said,
"And in what troop attendest thou?
Weepest or mockest?" My sham'd brow
Silent I hung, and when at last
I rais'd, the mournful pomp had past.

"Weepest or mockest!"—O fond heart,
Break from thy proud reserve, and tell:
Reply from every secret part,
Answer from each remotest cell.
I weep not—no, I feel and see
As if no blood had dropp'd for me.
I weep not—no: without a sigh
His types the sad, the poor, pass by.
I weep not—no; unwept are gone
Past moments: new unwept come on.

But, oh! I mock; each hour renews
A warning voice within my breast:
My pride each hour that voice subdues,
And glories in the ill-purchas'd rest.
I mock—blest Lord! thy glorious name
I bear, to bring it but to shame.
I mock—man finds me meek and low:
Stiff-neck'd and unrelenting, thou.
I mock—O thou long-sufferer, deep
Cleave this proud heart, and bid it weep!

V.

A MEDITATION:—ON EASTER DAY.

When on these limbs I look, which bear
And pen my burning spirit in,
Frail mansion of disease and care,
Dark hold of passion, home of sin:
Their beauty but corruption's bloom,
Their strength but bearer to the tomb;
And their informing mind
An inward sore, from day to day
That frets and eats poor life away,
Wounding where none can bind;
Oh! then I feel our downfall sting,
And groan in anguish, righteous King!

But when these limbs I view, and think
How, pent within their clayey nook,
That essence, which bids seraphs shrink,
An earthly residence could brook,
These veins with heaven's own pureness beat,
This breast of boundless mind was seat,
This voice awoke the dead,
This trunk 'mid shouting angels rose,
And all the father's glory glows
Around this hallow'd head;
Oh! then I feel our loss restor'd,
And shout thy name, redeeming Lord!

O Thou, whose sword wide-waving drove
Our sire from Eden's blessed glade,
O Thou, whose cross with gifts of love
Tenfold that day of wrath repaid,

This vaunting heart's presumption tame,
And fix, with all a rebel's shame,
Downcast on dust mine eyes;
But let my thoughts on Spirit's wing
Up to thy throne, immortal king,
E'en as thou rosest, rise.
In hope for future, pain for past,
So may I win thy home at last.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST MEMBER SENT OUT INTO THE WORLD.

It was a lovely morning in July, when having occasion to visit a remote part of my parish, I determined in my return to explore a glen which I had observed among the hills on viewing them from my churchyard, and had resolved to visit on the first opportunity. The woody tops of precipices which ran like walls upon each side, and were now lost, and now rose in rugged majesty, seemed to promise spots of no common beauty at their feet; and the distant roar which ever came from them before rain, (and it was a well-known presage,) with the quantity of water issuing into our river from that direction, confirmed the supposition. Nor was I in the least disappointed. I arrived at a point where the glen opened enough to admit of a strip of fields

of brightest green upon one side of the stream; they were divided by hedge-rows, in which grew some remarkably fine oaks, and gave a great richness to the scene. The day was hot and sunny, and I made my way to sit in the shade of one which hung over the stream. Here, to my great surprise, I found my friend, who had been from the same reasons attracted to the same spot. After mutual congratulations on finding each other in so well-chosen a place, and canvassing each the other's opinion of its beauties, we gradually came upon the subject of our late conversations. Such, said he, was my dear home: more like a temple inhabited by a train of priests ordained to carry on the perpetual service of God, than an ordinary residence: and if God ever shewed amid a family the special illumination of his presence, he did with us. Our service consisted not in the mere utterance of words, however earnest, nor succession of forms, however proper, but in the uninterrupted offering of the soul and body, through the lively exercise of our Christian duties; from the daily collision of hearts and minds brought together in the purity of the gospel, bright and beautiful sparks were struck out, and examples every moment elicited

of filial duty, brotherly love, instant forbearance, caution against offence, singleness of heart, cheerfulness, gentleness, meekness, charity. What a topic of pride and delight it is with the children of a growing family to compare their stature, note their height, remark upon the growth of nerve and muscle daily accruing to them, and to make trial with each other of their improving strength and skill in the games and pastimes of the day. So too was it with our spiritual growth. Every day a nearer approach to the Christian standard was remarked, some deficiency was filled up, some new grace developed, or old confirmed, and a continual rivalry and challenging went on in the practice of godly offices. And while the children of this world hail their accessions of bodily and mental strength as assurances of being able to make their way in the world, and if of generous temper, of being a shield and buckler to their family, so to us, growing up, as we deemed ourselves, to eternity, every example of increasing spiritual strength was a pledge that the possessor would not fail to maintain the unity of our spiritual household in despite of the endeavours of the world against it; and holding, as we did, that this unity, spiritually established

on earth, would also endure in heaven, every act of piety was an additional earnest of eternal union. Oh, what a blessed, what a happy home was mine!

Unalterable as our union in spirit has proved to me to be, that in the flesh was now shortly to cease. The world is every day demanding its conscripts, and at last arrived the turn of my eldest brother. Oh! what a lively recollection I retain (and well I may, for it was the first proper event in our family) of that morning which began the diminution of our family circle. I then awoke as from a dream to the world which surrounded us, and which we could scarcely be said to have heard or seen. I awoke, and looked tremblingly forward to the day when my summons also should arrive. I can at this moment distinctly and feelingly recall to mind the early hour of meeting on that morning, the unusual candlelight, the comfortless cold, darkness, and bustle, the chilly dawn discovered in a low ruddy streak just as we emerged from the deep shade of the garden to attend my brother to the carriage at the gate, but, above all, the solemnity of my father's last charge and benediction, and the singular conflict evidently going on in my brother's mind, whose

eye was now overcast with the sorrow of parting, and the weight of responsibility descending upon him, and now lighted up and sparkling with anticipation of the novel scene upon which he was entering. Ever as I bring back this scene to memory, I reflect how often, alas! how very often has that brightness of countenance with which the world is contemplated in prospect become dull upon the actual view, in how many has the eye's clear channel, between the inner and outer world, become paralysed with sorrow and set in a barren stare, or clogged with impurity that corrupted on its passage the most wholesome food of the mind. Not that any thing of this kind befel my brother; he ran his earthly career in peace and innocence.

Undoubtedly there is something exceedingly awful to reflecting minds in sending forth into the world a representative, as it were, of our home. His character is the result of all that has been said and done; in him all seem under trial, and as soon as the beloved object has quitted embrace and sight, the mind turns for comfort to its past communications with him. Every word and action, playful sally or grave precept, arises in the memory, and challenges us to judgment. It is, in fact, the same awful

feeling, however inferior in degree, with that which we experience in the case of departed friends. After the last breath is irrevocably gone, and we have retired from the chamber of death, we bethink ourselves how this thing said or done by us may have hurt the welfare of his immortal soul, and how this, which we have left unsaid or undone, would have benefitted it. Through our long course of intimacy and communion with him, we feel as if we had sent in his mind a portion of our own before the judgment-seat of Christ; and our common habits, studies, enjoyments, and conversation, are sifted and discussed in our bosoms with doubt and anxiety. The most serious minds are naturally most liable to such affection, and the elder part of our family were now engaged in these reflections. Never shall I forget the solicitude with which the first letter from my brother was expected. Little as it could really decide, yet every one looked forward to it as a resolver of his doubts, and his excited imagination insisted that the very first contact with the world would, like some rapid chemical test, bring his own work to the proof, and that the first few days would be at once a specimen and a pledge of our brother's future course.

After an anxious interval, which, short as it could reasonably be, appeared thrice the length to us, arrived his first letter. All occupations in an instant were at an end, the family met, a reader was appointed, a circle made. It was indeed a scene to remember; the elder hung with all the intense interest of novelty on scenes and circumstances, many of them perhaps unconceived before, all unwitnessed, and their breathless attention was now and then distracted by the younger ones demanding the explanation of some term hitherto unheard, which, according to its association, the interest of the passage, or the detail it would require, was either joyfully interpreted upon the spot, or impatiently and imperfectly explained, or perhaps abruptly refused its interpretation with reproving looks, and beckonings to silence. The letter was most satisfactory; it at once dispelled the gloomy phantoms of the imagination, and we put up his name in our evening prayer with all the earnestness of joy and gratitude. On this retrospect, how thankful do I feel to our heavenly Lord and Master; and though so many, very many years, have elapsed, I feel the same spirit which warmed my bosom then, revive with a glow upon the recollection.

Wonderful, indeed, was the effect which the various circumstances attending and following my brother's departure had upon those who were left behind. To speak of myself, I know that the continual anxiety expressed by my parents, the solemn and appropriate prayer by which he was set apart from the rest at morning and evening, the thanksgiving regularly offered for any success or escape from peril, bodily or spiritual, and the constant entreaties put up to obtain for him God's protection, which enumerated in plaintive and deprecatory expressions some of the snares to which he was most liable, all this, you may suppose, left upon my mind a deep and lasting impression. I learned by degrees to look forward to that world, my entrance upon which I before so impatiently expected, with a salutary anxiety, and to regard it, however calm and bright it may now appear, as a scene of future tempest and trial. I clearly understood that whatever novelties it may unveil, it had incalculably more than I had dreamed of, or could dream of, and these of no engaging description; that it had with all its scenes of bliss and enchanted gardens, its shipwrecks, its monsters, its savage islands and inhospitable shores. Moreover, from comparing

my brother's disposition as exhibited there with what I had known of it at home, I perceived their close connexion, saw that I was under a state of discipline, and that what might seem even trivial here, was, nevertheless, elementary to most important results there; that therefore it came equally under God's eye, and equally reaped future retribution for good or for evil. Much, too, I learned personally from my dear brother, who gave me the benefits of his experience, on occasional returns to home. At length, he came like the dove to the ark, to tell us that the waters were fast abating, and that we may shortly venture forth in safety: under his auspices I entered upon the world.

Often do I think of the preciousness of the reward with which God, even during this life, rewards the pious exertions of a parent. In contrast to the blissfulness of my own, I have now witnessed the shame, sorrow, and agony of more families than one, when their first-fruits have been blighted, when the very worst that their imaginations, stung by conscience or alarmed by sorrow, had been picturing, has been realized, and they stood in their own eyes as authors and confederates in his sins, when irrevocable word and deed is conjured up in an

agonized memory, and calls forth tears and sobbings, when the little ones beheld the elder bathed in tears, and they could not, dare not, explain to their innocent hearts the real cause. "Is he ill?" "Is he dead?" they ask; and, "Oh, happy if he had been, before he had thus fallen," is ready to burst from their lips. I have also before now turned away in disgust from those foolish and selfish murmurers, who, having sent their poor child all unprovided with what alone could guide him through the temptations of the world, have thrown the odious burden of their sin upon those to whose care they committed them, after having by previous neglect deprived them of all power of effecting good.

It was some days after my brother's departure, and not before we received his first letter, that we could reconcile ourselves to his disappearance; so many, so obvious, and so minute are the circumstances which determine the place of a member of a numerous family, that his image rises up before us at every step or turn. The emptiness of his chamber, his usual place at the table unfilled, a favorite walk discontinued, a voice no longer heard in the general conversation, even a step no longer observed amid the multitudinous din of a numerous

household, bring home to us a sense of diminished numbers, and provoke, before we have time to reflect, a repining sigh, or murmuring ejaculation. Yet with us there was no idle or prolonged regret. Our cheerfulness assumed indeed a more subdued character, but never failed us. Why should it? We had well habituated ourselves before-hand to count the cost of what, sooner or later, must be undergone; and, moreover, knit as we had been in those bonds which neither time nor place can weaken, we could never regard him as entirely absent. Yes, my dear friend, be assured that so strong, so unearthly become the bonds which unite those who have long lived together in the unity of the spirit, no less than community of blood, that they undoubtedly enjoy a certain, though undefinable, fruition of each other's presence; they hear each other's voices speaking in the depth of their bosoms, dissuading, approving, comforting, rejoicing, and thus realize, to its fullest extent, that blessed privilege, alas! how seldom enjoyed, or even understood, of the communion of saints.

It must, however, be confessed that there is something of melancholy, not entirely to be surmounted in the flesh, in this gradual dimi-

nution of the family circle. It is evidently following the fate of all things earthly; and the successive demands of this world, coming, like the conscription of a furious war, upon the young and vigorous, and bearing them away ever as they reach the proper standard, and leaving behind but a helpless society of women and children, reminds one fearfully of the order in which the next world too frequently does, and in their case may, make its exactions. Yet, deserted and declining as the household may appear, she has her comfort and causes of congratulation. In each of the settlers which she has sent forth, she may look for a flourishing colony, and see herself prolonged and multiplied in beautiful resemblances. Like Judah in her desolation, she is comforted with a proportionately greater brightness of prophecy: she may expect to stand in the majestic relation of a mother church, another Jerusalem, and surrounded by dutiful and holy daughters, each receiving from her hands, and proud to have received, her faith, her ritual, to await the coming of her Lord and Master, in his own good time, with confidence and hope.

GOD'S CONSCRIPT.

Come forth, my precious first-born, come,
  Away with weeds of soft delight;
Adieu to joys of peaceful home—
  Come, we must dress thee for the fight:
    For at my gate
    God's heralds wait,
And claim thee for his warring host;
Heaven's Conscript, haste, and take thy post.

O Thou, to fight the world design'd!
  Lo! first around thy boyish head
Salvation's starry helm we bind,
  Its blood-red plumage o'er thee shed.
    Proof to hell's dart,
    Across thy heart
In holy confidence we press
The seven-fold plate of righteousness.

Next, clasping round thy loins, we brace
  Truth's radiant belt; upon thy feet
The sandals of the gospel place:
  Now is thy vest of steel complete.
    Go, warrior, go,
    Defy the foe,
Thy head is clad, thy feet are shod
With all the panoply of God.

Last, to thy right hand we entrust
  The Spirit's sword—uplift, and wield;

And, blazing on thy left, adjust
Faith's broad impenetrable shield.
See to the air
Thy banner glare,
Christ's blood-red cross—there, there, my Son,
Ten thousand saints have fought and won.

Now is thy every want prepar'd,
And ready stands this chosen train,
In battle's heat thy body-guard,
Reproach and Hatred, Care and Pain.
Fear not, my child,
Their aspect wild,
A seraph each disguis'd will prove,
Glory and Gladness, Peace and Love.

Thou shalt with griding wounds be gor'd.
But see what healing balm I bring;
Not costlier that which Mary pour'd
Upon the everlasting King.
All pangs of hell
Its virtues quell,
Nerve with new strength in battle's strife.
Accept, my Son, the word of life.

Ha! thro' that bold and manly brow,
Inward lament, and tears I scan.
O yes! 'tis sad aside to throw
The stay and sympathy of man.
With rude control,
The yearning soul
To wrest from twinborn flesh, and lean
In spirit upon things unseen.

Upon thy Master's gory cross,
  Unflinching heart and will to bend,
Feel joy in sorrow, gain in loss,
  Torture in ease, and foe in friend :—
    Deem hate, want, sword,
    Thy richest hoard,
Find death in life, and life in death :—
Go, boy—God claims thy latest breath.

Now thou hast had my last embrace,
  Hast heard thy father's last command,
Turn, turn from home thy longing face,
  Go, take in God's bright host thy stand ;
    The battle's din
    Comes rolling in,
God's saints are shouting ; hie thee, hie,
March, boy, and share their victory.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FAMILY.

My friend one day paid me a visit unusually early, and told me that he was come upon his own invitation to pass the day with me. I was surprised, because I knew it was his rule to give a certain portion of the morning to his studies, and other occupations, before quitting the house either upon business or amusement. He appeared likewise unusually thoughtful, if not depressed. But this appearance gradually wore away as the day advanced. He did not propose any excursion, and our day's walk was confined to a turfy terrace in my garden, which commands a long view of the public road, where it runs upon the opposite side of the dingle, and at length vanishes over an ivied bridge, underneath which the torrent is seen foaming into the glen.

and afterwards disappearing and re-appearing amidst a most picturesque combination of rock and wood. At that bridge, ever as he turned round, he cast a fixed, and, as it were, recollective look, and then hastily withdrew it, with an action that seemed to shew that he was willing to shake off the thoughts which the sight of it suggested. At length, after an interval of silence had succeeded one of these contemplations, he began.

The sight of that bridge, you have no doubt observed, affects me much. It is just one mile from the manor-house and church, and the milestone which stands upon the centre-arch, was always hailed by me with boyish delight, as an assurance that home was at hand, whose territories seemed to commence from that point; and no less, on leaving home, it was a signal to forget it, and resign ourselves to the world, whose realm thence began and expanded into unlimited and unknown dreariness. To-day it becomes invested with peculiar importance: for this is the day of the year upon which all our absent members met under their father's roof, and the different parties which on this day were wont to hail its appearance with affectionate delight, have been crossing my mind. Alas! it is

to me indeed a bridge of sighs. In truth, it is this anniversary which has brought me here to ask a refuge with you this day; for, though I was not present at many such celebrations myself, after once leaving home, yet to spend it in the very house and room where we used to assemble our joyous members, sole remnant as I am, I feared would be a trial to which I had neither right nor reason to expose myself. It is easy to despise these weaknesses of the flesh spiritually, and so I certainly do, but it is not so easy to dismiss or subdue them bodily; there I should be on this day at the very central link of my most melancholy associations, and, however on other occasions I can calmly hold converse with those blessed spirits, yet, upon this day and in that place, they seem to resume flesh and blood. I therefore quitted the scene while yet its effects were resistible.

This day of meeting was always on the Saturday succeeding the anniversary of the marriage of our parents, and was so ordered to the end that all (some of whom had but a short time to spare upon it) may be present on the Sunday, when the whole family presented themselves, in grateful token of his continued protection, at the table of the Lord, exhibiting be-

fore him their unbroken line, blessing his holy name for past favours, and imploring his grace to make them worthy of their continuance. We thus exhibited, upon a small scale, an image of the great day of the Jews' Passover, when that prototype of all families, the family of Israel, met from every corner of the earth, in the temple of the Lord, and defiled before him in an innumerable throng, the substantial testimony of the endurance of his promises.

The day was well known to the neighbourhood, and a crowd of congratulators was always collected around the door, the poor were regaled, the steeple rang a merry peal, and on the Sunday our procession to church passed through a long lane of parishioners, who made a point of coming from the remotest paths, despite of all obstacles on this day, to testify their esteem for their pastor, by every token of reverence and love. The day of arrival was one indeed of breathless hurry and agitation. The interval necessary to the welcoming the arrival of one dear object, and indulging the first burst of affection, was yet unfinished, when another was announced, and the last straggler was seldom gathered in till the moment before the clock, whose simple well-known knell then

went to the very heart, summoned us to evening prayer; and oh! what prayer was that. Our hearts were full, even to bursting, with the sensible proof of God's mercies, past and continued; and the expressions of our simple liturgy, interwoven with every thing most dear and sacred, the spiritual milk of our childhood, coming now to our experience with a deeper meaning, and put up still in that voice to which from our cradle we had listened with dutiful and affectionate reverence, searched every secret of the bosom, and poured out in a full tide of adoration at the throne of mercy. The day passed in the mutual communication of our several states and prospects, from which we often digressed to notice the younger members of the family, still unfledged, who were now before our eyes, growing up in that discipline, to which we felt ourselves so much indebted.

Our family rose early, for indulgence in sleep was always reprobated among us as an injury done to nature, both in body and mind: but my father was ever earliest. Whoever first entered the room always found him engaged over Scripture, or some volume of divinity, which he then laid aside: at this time he was more than usually cheerful. As each entered the room, he

regarded them with a fixed and penetrating look, from which a benevolent smile round his lips took off all that could make it in the least disagreeable. I have heard him explain it: he would say, I know no feeling so exquisite, though it has been every day repeated for so many years, (praised be God!) as that of the sight of my family in the morning. Having myself risen quite a renovated being, no particle remaining of that weary, and perhaps painful load, with which I yesternight pressed my bed, and seeing them whom I then parted from, returning to me with smiling and healthy countenances, I experience a renewal, as it were, of my existence, and fresh myself, seem to receive my children afresh from the hand of God. I look and scrutinize their features, that I may discern in them traces of that blessed communion, from which they are just returned to earth and given to me again, and when I press their hands, feel an union with them which is quite unutterable. And do you think, that upon such an occasion I do not look forward to that last morning of universal rising, when the good, having cast off the bandages of pain and care with which they lay down to rest, shall rise in heavenly vigour for everlasting day, and I too

(I humbly hope) shall receive my family at the hands of my Saviour, not one member wanting, never to part again. Oh! the thought is my continual stay and comfort.

There is something indescribably joyous in the assemblage of a family at the first meal of the day, when previous prayer and praise have consecrated it as the merciful continuance of past blessings, and as the earnest of future. The heart having been jointly lifted up with others in all its morning freshness, experiences a calm and security, which the world has yet had no time to ruffle; and on looking round the circle of beloved objects, when I saw it still full, notwithstanding the breaches which sickness and death are making day and night upon such clusters of society, saw it still enjoying together the bounties of God's hand, notwithstanding the crowds to which they are daily denied, I have thought the mercies of the Almighty came to me multiplied tenfold. He had continued them not to one of us only, but to the whole body. Our meal thus refreshed not only the body, but the spirit too, and bore, I sometimes fancied, a reference to that which our Lord ate with his disciples at Emmaus on the day of his resurrection; there was in it a fulness of joy, of joy

the fruit of spiritual thankfulness not unbecoming the partakers of the resurrection, a type and earnest of which they had newly experienced in rising from sleep.

The benefit of these periodical re-unions is too obvious to dwell upon. It must have been much increased at a later period, when I was away. Then two of my brothers were married, and their families met under the roof of their common father: thus the children were brought to an intermediate link between home and the world, to a relation distant enough to enlarge their notions, and yet near enough to maintain their affections, and in the presiding patriarch, the object of their own parent's love and reverence, they saw a substantial example of those higher relations which children have such difficulty in conceiving.

I used to come home on these occasions like a thirsty hart to the brook; the world dries up, in despite of every endeavour, the freshness and flow of heart which we take from home. I gave myself up therefore entirely to its enjoyments, and imbibed its refreshing holiness at every mental pore; the time indeed was short: it seldom exceeded three days, and we parted cheerfully in full confidence of God's protec-

tion. I remember, however, that at our meeting which preceded the first death in our family, some forebodings manifested themselves amongst us; they were not directly declared by any one, and yet by various ways were discovered to be shared by all. Not that I attribute any thing extraordinary, still less supernatural, to such ominous feelings. It was natural, after we had met several times, and were now, from age, occupation, and other circumstances, more exposed to accidents, for reflecting minds to entertain such notions. This was the first time that they were generally entertained, and the corresponding event shortly following, invested them with the dignity of prophecy. However it be, my father evidently felt no less strongly than the rest, and the charge which he gave us on rising from prayer (in which his tone was deepened to unusual solemnity) on the morning of departure, shewed how deeply he was impressed. My dearest children, he said, we have once more, through the continuance of his merciful goodness, presented an unbroken line before the Lord. We have jointly prayed for a prolonging of his mercies, and I doubt not that he will prolong. But do not presume upon this coming in the particular shape which we,

frail and ignorant mortals, may have been desiring, but be assured that it will arrive in such a way as may be best for us; he will not reverse, through our prayers, those laws by which in his bounty and wisdom he governs the world, and, therefore, a family numerous as ours cannot expect to proceed much farther on the journey of life with undiminished numbers. A great portion of the advantages conferred by surrounding each of us with so many worthy objects of esteem and love, is now well nigh accomplished; our affections have been nurtured up in pure and holy communion, our spiritual strength, in which we so much assisted each other, is now sufficiently firm in each to enable him to stand alone; the preparatory discipline of home, therefore, is reaching its close, and it is usual in God's dealings with this world to withdraw the means as soon as the end shall have been attained. It behoves us, therefore, whenever this occasion recurs, to think and feel as if it were the last. Uninterrupted happiness is very far from being a proof of God's favour, and we should love this world too much, were he to continue to us unimpaired the blessings of the communion which we are now enjoying. Every family must one day vanish from beneath

the sun, and leave its place in the soil of God's vineyard to be occupied by another. Look at the unceasing march which is going on from this world to the next; flesh is daily escaping from our eyes into spirit, and the visible church fast melting into the invisible. And shall we, in the sight and daily contemplation of such changes, expect to remain stationary? Oh no! soon, very soon, the communion of some of us with you will be no longer in the flesh. I think that I perceive among you some misgivings of our present stability; repel them not, for God hath put them into your hearts to prepare you. Yea! take heed to yourselves, my children, murmur not, but be ready for the separation, and learn (if indeed ye need to learn, and my teaching has been in vain,) to look upon the world into which ye are now upon the point of going, to be scattered once again from underneath this roof, as a lively type of the grave into which we shall all finally be dispersed, and this our joyful re-assemblage as a figure of our eternal re-union; and as the inertness of the grave to our present vivid feelings, even such consider these feelings to be, compared with those intense and heavenly affections with which we shall be then endued. Let

us not, therefore, be taken by surprise, but looking forward to the first diminution of our numbers, consider this, when it comes, as a signal that the days of our wanderings in this wilderness of care are nearly accomplished, that our spies have reached the promised land, and that we shall shortly follow.

Finally, my dear children, I charge you in his words, who hath so gloriously set before us the resurrection of the dead, and the life to come, not to be faint and weary in the work of the Lord, for you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord; and remember that much, very much, has been done for you, and much, very much, will be required. May the guidance of God's Holy Spirit be with you; may the Lord Jesus protect you; farewell!

On that we all rose up to part; silent tears were shed, close embraces given, and my father pronounced his blessing over each with even more than wonted fervour and solemnity. It was a scene of sorrow, but of that godly sorrow, that peace and uncomplaining resignation of mind, which the Ephesian Elders experienced on parting with St. Paul. We were, indeed, losing each other's bodily presence, but felt assured of the continuance of our spiritual,

through all chances and changes. In a few minutes afterwards, we had quitted the door, we bowled over that bridge; and yonder, where this road branches into several more, parted to our several destinations.

We never met in our full number again.

THY HOME.

Where is thy home?—not where thy soul
Is joyous o'er the ruddy bowl,
Where harp and viol thro' the day
And down at night keep care at bay.
O heir of a most glorious sphere,
Look farther still—it is not here.

Where is thy home?—not where thy breast
With cold is numb'd, with hunger prest,
Nor day brings ease, nor night repose,
Morn opes with toils, eve shuts with woes.
O heir of a more glorious sphere,
Look farther still—it is not here.

Where is thy home?—not where all ranges,
Threading a thousand dismal changes;
Where young grows old, and long grows brief,
Friend turns to foe, and joy to grief.
O heir of a more glorious sphere,
Look farther still—it is not here.

Where is thy home?—not where the breath
Thou scentest every hour of death,
And startest at the crashing sound
Of all thou lovest falling round.
O heir of a more glorious sphere,
Look farther still—it is not here.

Where is thy home?—not where to learn
Is but thy folly to discern,
And wisdom's privilege to know
A wider range of crime and woe.
O heir of a more glorious sphere,
Look farther still—it is not here.

Where is thy home?—not where thy heart
Hears earth's impatient cry, "depart,"
And all her shapes each moment say,
"Thou art a stranger; hence, away!"
O heir of a more glorious sphere,
Look farther still—it is not here.

Where is thy home?—where tear and groan,
And change and crime are names unknown,
Where wisdom, pureness, bliss, are one,
And thou, no longer guest, art son.
O heir of an undying sphere,
No farther look—thy home is here.

CHAPTER VII.

A RAMBLE OF A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY.

I MENTIONED before my unexpected meeting with my friend one morning in a distant spot. He had become celebrated in the neighbourhood for the length and loneliness of the walks which he was in the habit of taking, of greater length and frequency, it seemed to us, than was suitable to his advanced years. It was evident that he was now retracing, in his old age, the favorite rambles of his youth, and I was entreated by his housekeeper to exert what influence I had in moderating his ardour. She observed, nevertheless, that, however fatigued, he always returned in spirits, even when he had left the house in an evident fit of dejection.

Once or twice he took me as his companion,

which I considered no trifling compliment. On one of these occasions, he led me to the summit of a lofty headland, which rises precipitously at the mouth of a valley, so as to divide its fertile width, and change it into two wild and narrow passes; the eye commands from it a great extent of mountainous prospect, and hence he pointed out to me some of his most favorite spots. Do you observe, he said, that cluster of cone-shaped peaks, rising in faint blue, above the deep indigo of the general ridge, forming our horizon; the sea washes their base: they were, consequently, to me the representatives of an unknown world, and here have I sat for hours, and meditated upon that world, upon which I was conscious that I must one day enter. I pictured to my imagination the cities, the ships, and the crowds which they overlooked, and almost envied these inanimate spectators. Philosopher never looked more earnestly on the moon than I in my speculations upon yonder peaks.

After some further comment, he directed my eye, with his finger, over another ramble. I traced it in the line of a green sheep-track, across a hill, whence it followed a pathway in a deep glen, and a line of black specks in the

distant stream denoted the massive stepping-stones over which it passed; its termination was a waterfall, hidden behind a projecting crag, but its situation was discoverable from the light clouds of spray which ever and anon sped across the valley. Other rambles were pointed out in succession, till I confess that I began to grow weary of looking, and should assuredly weary my reader with describing.

When at length he had finished thus directing my attention, he said, of all that I saw and see scarcely any thing seems changed; not so much as a hut or a tree. Nay, the very gleams and shadows look as if they had been reposing undisturbed upon the landscape these forty years; and though both my frame of mind and external circumstances are now so altered, as to have but little communion with the thoughts which this scene used formerly to suggest, such is its magical effect, as to call up those long-forgotten trains in a bosom so adverse, or at least indifferent, to their entertainment. This view always excited in me an undefinable melancholy, which I believe to be the universal effect of beautiful scenery upon minds capable of enjoying it. That melancholy, however, was so far from unpleasing, that I sought the indulgence of

it. There was in it a sanctity of feeling, an outpouring of the heart before God, a deep sense of my fleeting estate here, and an earnest yearning after things still better and more beautiful than what I beheld so glowing around me. Every sensible bosom must experience somewhat of this, but I place its peculiar character among the many happy results of the society and unremitting sympathy of a religious home, which is of such efficacy as to continue its impulse upon our solitary moments. Living under the same moral clime and mental sky, we never feel distinctly apart from each other, and, assured of our spiritual union, can afford to indulge in reflections upon our earthly separation. Of this separation we are warned by the face of nature, the instant that we quit the door. Her steadfast and unchangeable forms, her mountains, her rivers, and her valleys, come into immediate contact, and contrast with the changes of which we are conscious in ourselves, and sensible in others. The fading foliage of the wood, the transitory gleam of sunshine, awake, indeed, the same feeling; but there we seem at least upon a par, and regard the lesson which they read us as the admonition of an equal, born to die like ourselves. But in the

lesson which is read to us by the changeless and unorganized forms of nature, there is all the decision and sternness of a superior. We feel ourselves looked down upon, fleeting beings of an hour, by these gigantic witnesses of our creation. Hence a feeling of humiliation and melancholy which I have often thought it required all the consolations of Christianity to combat: combined, however, with these I found it pleasing, so that I could regard all with a cheerful smile, take their rude and menacing hints with all good will, and the more dear to me the objects of home, the more could I afford to indulge in it. Through a perishable world, I looked to an imperishable; I felt safe and fixed in my spiritual station, and, like the spectator described by the poet, felt peculiar and heightened enjoyment in the view of its contrast with the violent and unceasing changes around me.

When the mind has once come to this understanding with nature, and arrived at what lies beyond her brute and outward shapes, it acquires a wonderful power of analogy, and rapidly passes, by means of visible objects, as by symbols, to what is invisible. A prospect spread before it, like this, seems (but I cannot adequately express myself) to be an enormous

vest thrown over the spiritual world, to prevent our giddiness, by hiding from the eye its tremendous profundity, and we delight to speculate upon what portions of that world may lie beneath this or that fold of the garment, and give it its peculiar shape. A moral starts up to the mind in every object, every thing around pours forth a spiritual lesson, and the eye, with more powerful magic than that enjoyed by the hand of Midas, turns every thing to gold; peculiar thoughts, and peculiar combinations of thought, present themselves in a scene, however familiar to the eye: the least difference, as a gleam of light, strikes a different key note in the mind, leads a different arrangement of thought, presides over a different melody. Thus the mind runs through its whole compass, becomes acquainted with all its resources, feels conscious of its capability of enjoyment, and derives that enjoyment from objects and changes of objects, which to the vulgar, if observed at all, appear minute and uninteresting.

I do not deny that much of this enjoyment may be perceived by a mind, whose religious feelings are comparatively superficial. But, assuredly, the lessons derived are much less wholesome, and have a constant tendency to

establish there a natural religion, in exclusion to revealed; indeed, it appears to me that the habitual contemplation of Nature, unless directed by a strong bias, previously impressed, (and where and how so strongly as in such a home as mine,) leads its indulger into imminent danger of reverting to that imperfect stage, which gave rise to the superstitions of heathenism, when the mind, transported with the lovely combinations presented to it, and enabled to proceed from these to still more lovely and magnificent in its own conceptions, cannot allow such beauty to exist without some mind of a higher order being ever present to enjoy it, cannot admit it to be wasted for a moment upon insensibility. Hence it assigns a sacredness to every romantic spot, peoples streams, woods, and mountains, with forms of divinity, and bows before the creatures of its own imagination. I have myself seen several examples of practical infidelity among the professed admirers of nature, which, in weak minds, was rendered still more disgusting by a mawkish sentimentality, which it mistook for religious feeling; and have met with magnificent talkers upon the glory of God, as set forth in nature,—how all that we see composed his temple, how

earth was its floor, the sky its dome—whose religion seem to be confined to a round of such unmeaning and unprofitable phrases. But a mind deeply imbued with the truths of revealed religion, instead of being bewildered in the tumult of thoughts presented, and being intoxicated with the idea of its own wealth, framing arbitrary and capricious notions, and being thus taken captive, as it were, by its own people, has the proper bonds of association already furnished, its peculiar powers of selection previously formed, and the man comes upon the face of nature, not to find his religion there, but with it burning in his bosom. He exercises a complete dominion over the irregular crowd of ideas which is rapidly flowing in upon him from without, and compels them to blend in with the holy thoughts which he has already in treasure there, assimilates them, and brings them into complete subjection to the healthy and vigorous organization of his mind.

The first emotion excited, being a sense of God's infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, suggested by the outward objects, may indeed be the same with that of natural religion. But then it is momentary, being only introductory to the deeper feeling of revealed, which imme-

diately, as it were by impulse, starts up in the bosom, much in the same way as the brute inanimate forms without put into exercise our lively organs, or as those comparatively coarse organs of the body stir into action the spiritual operations of the soul. And it is as impossible for the truly religious Christian to rest in that first impression on his mind, as for the educated man in the first upon his organs. As the latter differs from the savage, so the former from the man of mere natural religion.

With my thoughts and feelings fresh from a holy home, I came each day upon this lovely scenery, and the sense of such blessings without, confirmed me in the consciousness of the value of that which I had received within. My thoughts ran, indeed, in new trains, and therefore with more vigour and pleasure; but still it was reviewing the same grand object in different lights, and I never for a moment parted with the feeling of being one of that flock which was once lost, but now is again being gathered under the great shepherd, Christ Jesus.

How blessed, after such excursions, was the return to the calm but deep sympathy of the family circle, to be again in communion with

beings which were not only shadows and types, like those of dumb nature, but realities and substantial pledges too ; who were not of this world only, but of the next also ; on whom, when we looked, we were answered with thought for thought, affection for affection, and, pouring out the treasures of our late meditation, experienced a consciousness of our renewed energy of mind, and enjoyed the interchange of pious reflection. Such society I have no longer to receive me upon my return ; nevertheless, the good effect remains, and little should I have profited by what I have been detailing, were I for a moment to complain.

Having now rested for a considerable time, and observing the day wearing fast apace, we descended the hill upon our return. I left the old man at his door, with a strong feeling of pity for the solitude to which I was consigning him. He bade me, however, a cheerful farewell, and promised, in a few days, to conduct me upon another of his favorite rambles.

RAMBLES IN THE VALLEY.

I.

The Glen.

I came my favorite glen to seek,
To gaze upon its oaken wood,
Its rocky headland, cloud-capt peak,
Its whiten'd tower, and sparkling flood.
Alas! I came to seek in vain.
Dark folds of mist, and drizzly rain
Thickly envelop'd all.
But on my ear with deafening clang,
From viewless heights incessant rang
Its furious waterfall.

Shut out from sight, I felt that din
Vibrate beyond my outer ear;
I heard it speak my breast within.
See typified, O mortal, here,
An hour that soon must come to thee,
When all that thou did'st love to see
Shall sink in sorrow's veil:
And from behind the dripping screen,
As now, the voice of things unseen
Shall tell a fearful tale.

A voice from follies flown and past,
A voice from retribution nearing,
A voice from health no more to last,
A voice from comrades disappearing,

A voice from the dull world that flies,
A voice from parting vanities,
A voice from outliv'd bliss,
A voice from the wide-gaping tomb,
A voice from the dread world to come—
Go, Mortal, think on this.

II.

The Ruin.

I made for Buildwas,—o'er her graves,
Her shatter'd tombs, her rifted tower,
Her shafts where the tall ivy waves,
To pass a contemplative hour:
And, as I journey'd, in my mind
A picture of old days design'd,
Forgotten rites renew'd;
And I beheld assembled there,
From porch to chancel bow'd in prayer,
A countless multitude.

The vase with holy water teem'd,
The pealing organ shook the nave,
Hoar clouds of fragrant incense steam'd,
Bright lamps a flood of radiance gave;
And from their chairs of sculptur'd stone,
Three gorgeous priests, as from a throne,
Survey'd the prostrate train.
Image on image fir'd my breast,
And, with the dazzling show possest,
I stood within the fane.

There all the consecrated ground,
Nave, chapel, choir, and aisle,
Throng'd by a bleating flock I found:
Quite crowded was the pile.
The holy vase with waves was fill'd,
From Heaven's own sacred breast distill'd,
And in the stony chair
A shepherd's boy, with cord and crook,
Kept watch, with contemplative look,
Upon his fleecy care.

O God! how simple, how severe
Thy mockery, when thou would'st deride
The fools that deem to please thine ear
With pomp of power, and rites of pride.
Thou by a stripling did'st rebuke
A giant's might, and here thy look
In bitter jeer hath smil'd:
And thou, to shew thy scorn and hate,
Of cowering crowds and priestly state,
Hast chosen a flock and child.

RAMBLES UP THE STREAM.

I.

The Still Stream.

Oh stream! on which my boyhood play'd
In many a reckless freak,
To manhood's eye, severe and staid,
How different dost thou speak.

Then as I clave
Thy glassy wave,
How joy'd I, on thy bosom blue,
To feel that I was flowing too.

But now, where'er I cast my eye,
Before my pensive soul
Spreads the broad reach of days gone by,
And days yet future roll.
Adown life's stream
To float I seem,
Still quitting old, attaining new.
O river! I am flowing too.

How calm, how still thou sleepest here!
And yet behind, before,
With heavy murmur on my ear,
Thy angry cataracts roar.
So yester's sorrow,
So painful morrow,
This momentary calm break thro'.
O river! I am flowing too.

Adown thy clear and tranquil breast
Wreath'd foam and bubbles throng.
Ha! a strange contrast they attest:
Thou hast not rested long.
So this calm face
With tell-tale trace
Passions scarce lull'd to sleep imbue.
O river! I am flowing too.

Branches, and foliage, and flowers,
Faded, and bruis'd, and broken,
Steal down thy stream, of passionate hours
At once the spoil and token.
So marr'd, so vain
To me the gain
Which once from feverish hours I drew.
O river! I am flowing too.

Here, heaven with every brightest beam
Painteth thy glassy floor;
There, shiver'd in the eddying stream
His picture glows no more.
So now my thought
His hues hath caught.
Ah me! what marring will ensue.
O river! I am flowing too.

Here flowery mead, majestic tree;
Green hillock deck thy strand:
But soon thy only bank shall be
Lank reed, and fruitless sand.
So proud, so fair
Have been my share:
Now barren helplessness is due.
O river! I am flowing too.

Here gaze I on the hills that hold
Thy cradle in their cave;
There, round the bright horizon roll'd,
The ocean gleams, thy grave.

So here the womb,
And there the tomb,
Close at each end, my straining view.
O river! I am flowing too.

But from that grave thy waves remount,
And tarrying with the sun,
Return to fill thy crystal fount,
Again their course to run.
So to the skies
This breath shall rise,
To run its race of life anew.
O river! I am flowing too.

II.

The Cataract.

Thou clamorous cataract, once again
I draw in midnight musings nigh;
Roar on: unheeded is thy strain,
Unanswer'd as the maniac's cry.
For blustering winds their fill have blown,
The waving woods have ceas'd to groan,
The curlew's screaming note
No longer haunts yon peaked crest,
The unfolded flock is sunk to rest,
And man far far remote.

Mute, dark is all, nor sound, nor sight
Tell God's right hand is busy still,

Save that thy cry of quenchless might
Proclaims him now from hill to hill.
Yes, herald of the desert, yes,
Thy voice pervades the wilderness,
"Repent; thy Lord is near!"
E'en thus thy solemn accents roll
Their mystic music on my soul,
And raise a holy fear.

And from thy cauldron's deep abyss
As comes the roar, and thundering beat,
And raving lash, and frantic hiss,
Shake me upon my rocky seat.
O thou importunate Sabbath-bell,
That wakest the reposing dell,
Thou callest me to prayer.
Ah! now I hear the mental din
That boils my sinful breast within,
Thine apt resemblance there.

Pride, shame, rebellious discontent,
And wrath that raves, and griefs that pine,
There hourly struggle for their vent.
Ah! could their turmoil end like thine!
For yonder thy unprison'd stream
Steals soft beneath the moonlight beam,
Far on its sinuous fold,
Beneath the cotter's boxen hedge,
'Mid drowsy herds, thro' rush and sedge,
Gentle as sleep is roll'd.

Oh! were thus quell'd my bosom's strife!
And would that in my listless ears,
E'en as thy stream, the stream of life
Had thunder'd, as they flow'd, the years,
Months, days, hours, moments, spent and flown,
Had not a rear of menace shewn,
And, turning round at last,
Like the deceitful Parthian foe,
Bent their inevitable bow,
Most terrible when past.

Blest stream! a few short days, and I
Must bid thy rocks and waves adieu;
Yet memory oft shall bring thee nigh,
And night thy warning voice renew.
And oh! in crowds when far away
With dissipated thoughts I stray,
Oft may some kindred sound
Fall sternly on this listless ear,
And thee and all thy lesson bear,
And check the giddy round.

Meanwhile unheeded from the hill
Shalt thou thy chasm'd waters hurl,
Sole visitants to thy distant rill
The plundering heron, the angling churl.
Oh, no! may some sage pilgrim then
Be summon'd to thy noisy glen,
And as he bends to see
Thy whirl of waves, and cavern dim,
May then thy thunder preach to him,
As it hath preach'd to me.

III.

The Source.

Now shaking glens with furious leap,
Now beneath woods in slumber cast,
Now threading vales with winding sweep,
I have chas'd and track'd thee home at last.
Free from fierce noontide's glare and heat,
I hail thy cavern's gelid seat,
Where, cradled as a child,
In sparry font thy crystal lymph,
The bath, as of a mountain-nymph,
Sleeps still and undefil'd.

Oh, how contrasted with the course
Thro' which this morn I have trac'd thy wave;
There, noise and ostentatious force,
Here, the mute stillness of the grave.
A baby in its mother's womb
Art thou, ere yet unkindly doom
Have cast thee into day;
And at the very gate of life
The passions have commenc'd their strife,
And mark'd with foam their way.

No particle of sordid earth,
No neighbouring torrent's muddy stream,
Defiles thee in thy stainless birth,
Nor daylight warms with harlot beam;

But cold and pure, as saintly maid,
Into the world, of taint afraid,
Thou issuest from thy cell.
Ah, soon the fen's polluting drain,
And city's reeking filth, shall stain
Thy now translucent well.

With dews thro' earth from heaven distill'd,
Pure and unmixt thou feedest here;
And seest thy sparry cistern fill'd,
Then burstest thro' thy cave's barrier.
The meadows laugh as on thou pourest,
A brighter green bedecks the forest,
The cattle of the mountain
Exulting to thy bounty flies,
The shepherds bless in ecstacies
Thy never-failing fountain.

Ah! would, O stream, e'en such were I,
In studious solitude that nurst,
And flowing o'er with heaven's supply
To eyes of man my lore could burst,
Rolling with lofty chime along,
While to the stream in anxious throng
Repair the wise and good,
And age on age behold it wind,
And fructify fresh fields of mind
With undecaying flood!

Ah! no such emblem, stream, of thee,
Intrudes upon thy silence now,

And lifts the flaring torch to see
Thy marble chamber's sparry glow.
But thou a lesson just hast dealt,
And I the lesson just have felt
And blush'd, as well I might,
When I my course with thine compare,
Barren with fruitful, foul with fair,
And turbulent with bright.

IV.

The Swollen Stream.

It was but a short hour ago,
And I was gazing on thy stream,
O Yure, and pierc'd thy depths below,
Illumin'd by the morning beam,
And watch'd beneath each rock's dark shade,
Thy trout in blissful stillness laid,
And as I turn'd away,
Thy tabouring wave, like infant's clack,
With innocent prattle call'd me back
Again to gaze and play.

But now along thy echoing glen
I hear thee raving hoarse and loud,
Like wild-beast chafing in his den,
And see thee whirling up a cloud
Off thy vex'd wave, from sheltering rock
Thy foamy wreath's impetuous shock

Thy scaly tribes hath sent,
And on thy bank with net in hand
The wily poacher takes his stand,
On lawless plunder bent.

Yea! purity alone is safe,
And meekness strong to guard its own;
Boast, vaunt, be turbulent and chafe,
Thy grace is fled, thy wealth is gone;
For round thy steps, and round thy gate,
Intent the ruthless spoilers wait,
And each unguarded hour
To force or flattery open yields
Thy fame, thy fortune, house, and fields—
E'en so thou warnest, Yure.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST DEATH IN THE FAMILY.

I have already mentioned the monuments raised to the several generations of the Rector's family, which in the different styles of different periods adorned the walls of the chancel. The latest was a long plain tablet of white marble, exhibiting a full and sorrowful list of names, which were those of the Rector, and his wife and children. There was just sufficient room left at the bottom to add the name of my friend to that catalogue, that counterpart, as I trust it is, of their enrolment in the register of eternal life. It began with recording the death of a girl of fifteen, exciting thus a melancholy interest even in the stranger. It was ever catching my eye, and often, when waiting for parties expected to some of the holy offices, I have seated myself upon the bench opposite, and

gazed in melancholy abstraction upon this commencement of its legend. I scarcely ever, I think, went lower in the list. This first name was fully sufficient to occupy my thoughts for the remainder of the time. In this seemed summed up the history of the family. In a girl of fifteen, was made the first breach of that line which the family had with such joy annually presented before the Lord. This gentle creature was appointed to be invested with that mysterious dread, that awful and shrinking feeling with which we always regard our first connexion in the spiritual world; and her voice, which was ever the herald of affection and joy, was doomed to speak with them from the tomb on death and judgment to come.

In her fall was heard the first crash of the breaking up of this visionary world of flesh, and of the bursting in of the reality of the spiritual, the type began to give way, and the substance to be established. O God! thou dost not deal with thy beloved by obscure and perplexing hints, but by open and unerring signs, and therefore didst not begin the work of their removal from earth by taking away those whom nature seemed to call, but her whose death made the rest consider their life as in jeopardy every hour.

I was not present, alas! said my friend, one day, when he found me in the act of contemplating this monument; I was not present at the mournful scene, but arrived on the evening of the fatal day, too late to receive her parting breath. I will not dwell upon it. It was, indeed, a day of darkness. But the next, I have good occasion to recollect, came with somewhat of light, and brought healing upon its wings. Night, by its refreshment to the body, but still more by that spiritual intercourse with God, to which in a manner it compels every reflecting sufferer, had done much to take out the sting of grief, and when we entered the room for prayer, it was evident, from the looks of all, that the past hours of darkness had been busy ones of meditation and self-examination. By that instinctive and unaccountable communication, which ever takes place between minds similarly affected, we seemed completely to understand one another before a word had been spoken. Our mutual remarks, therefore, consisted of that studied common-place, that peculiar kind, which, while it displays no efforts of the mind, shews at the same time that it is working hard and deep beneath the surface. At length, all were assembled for prayer, and yet there was

a pause. All did not seem assembled; looks were turned towards the door, as if yet another was to enter, who could never enter more. It was but for a moment. The dream and self-delusion, into which the effect of long habit had cheated us, broke up, the mournful reality flashed upon us, and, with a gentle sigh of resignation, we addressed ourselves to the morning prayer.

Oh, how affecting was now its worship, how humble and how fervent the celebration of its simple ritual. My father's voice was firm, indeed, as usual, but yet a plaintive softness now marked the close of every petition. Amid these solemn strains was heard, ever and anon, a sob escaping from some breast, which thus betrayed the secret of its resignation having not yet been quite attained, while the sudden check given to it by the utterer, shewed that he was resolved to attain. Or a gentle sigh arose, suppressed, however, as soon as heaved, upon some particular response which brought to mind the person no longer among them; and especially, I remember the breathless pause when the prayer came, in which particular individuals of the family, from various causes, were named, and the name of the deceased,

grown familiar, alas! through her long sufferings, upon the list, was omitted for the first time. She seemed then, indeed, quite gone from among us. I have before me, too, even at this moment, the deep-drawn ejaculation and unwonted energy given to certain of the responses, the full force and sense of which now for the first time seemed to flash on the mind of the repeater, and to chime in with all the yearnings of his heart.

It was my father's custom to read immediately after prayers a portion of Scripture, upon which he always hung some spiritual exhortation. I need not add, that in his choice of passages he was led by the particular occasions which presented themselves. The second week of our mourning happened to be passion-week, a most happy coincidence, inasmuch as our attention was thus, in the most powerful degree possible, diverted from our own sufferings to those of a crucified Saviour, which were appointed to take away all lasting cause of sorrow. Several applications now occur to me which my father made to our circumstances in the course of this week. The Monday, you know, is the anniversary of our Lord's visiting his temple, and purifying it, by turning out those

who were carrying on traffic there. On finishing the narrative, as given by St. Mark, he said: "And now, my children, from this temple of the family of Israel let us turn to our own, for I trust that we have God's temple among us, though not built with stones, such as our Lord's disciples pointed out to him with fond admiration, but far more glorious, built up with living spirits; yea, and its Lord and Master hath entered this temple, entered, too, with the scourge in his hand. Oh! depend upon it that we had been giving too much to this transitory life; its unbroken happiness was seducing our hearts from the eternal bliss of the next. Oh yes! he found a barter going on here—a barter of holiness for indulgence, of soul for body, of eternity for an hour. Thus were we profaning his courts, and therefore he hath entered them with stripes. But shall we dare to be fretful under this presence of our glorious visitant? Rather let us in tears, and with all humbleness of heart, thank him, that he hath thus ejected all unmeet intruders, purged it of its pollutions, and by the very act shewn what a regard he has for it. Let us pray him to re-establish his altars, renew the sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart, and make it, by whatever means he

shall deem best, however painful they may seem to us, a fit abode wherein he may delight to dwell, and fill the house with the glory of the illumination of his Holy Spirit."

The next day presented us a still stronger appeal. Its historical fact was the awful prediction of our Lord, uttered against Jerusalem from Mount Olivet. Behold, my children, said my father, on closing the volume, a tremendous refutation of an opinion too commonly entertained, that continued prosperity is a sign of God's favour. No! the unchastised son is also the unregarded, and the absence of his intervention for sorrow is also the absence of his love. What family ever presented a more gorgeous appearance of prosperity than that of Israel at this moment? Our Lord looked down from Mount Olivet on a magnificent city, crowned with its temple, glowing with clusters of domes, and files of columns, on crowds of merchants and pilgrims pressing in at the gates, and heard its ceaseless hum and din, which arose from the throng gathered from the four corners of the earth to celebrate the Passover, the grand festival of their deliverance. Every thing tended to remind the Jew of God's promises of wealth and power, and in the intoxica-

tion of his national festival his heart leaped at the review of his strength and numbers, and looked at that moment for the Messiah to descend in the clouds of heaven, and lead him forth to the conquest of the earth. He cast an eye, perhaps at Mount Olivet, as he gazed in exultation around, and saw all verdant, calm, and sunny there as usual. Yet, at that very moment, from that very spot, the curse was pronouncing against him. In about forty years he celebrated his last Passover, and God bitterly derided him by slaying his first-born, and delivering him over to the most awful destruction recorded in history. Here, then, my children in this family of Israel, is a lesson for every family under heaven. This family had her prophets sent to her from time to time, while still her term for repentance was unexpired, and every family has had similar warnings by angels from God, in the shape of some visitation, and a long run of high prosperity is indeed ominous. Oh! it is often that dreadful period of calm which intervenes between sending his last prophet, and coming himself in accumulated wrath to destroy. It is too often that tremendous interval in which the Almighty retributor gives up the sinner to take his own ways, and this

the miserable infatuated victim mistakes for prosperity. It is too often that awful time, when Jesus, as then with the Jews, hath ceased to reply and rebuke, and is preparing to root out. Therefore, let us rather congratulate ourselves upon this interruption to our long-continued domestic happiness. God still watches over us, he has not exhausted his warnings. Let us, then, entertain this prophet, and every other which he may think good to send, with due reverence, and turn from the allurements of life to the Lord our God, lest, by evil-treating them, we at length become blind to the last messenger to repentance, and crucify afresh the Lord of glory.

It is a common remark, that the advantages enjoyed by a numerous family are pretty nearly compensated by the greater number of misfortunes to which, of course, they are liable. But, it has seldom been observed how much more patiently such misfortunes are borne; the superior advantages of community in affliction are fully equal to those experienced in the participation of enjoyment. More topics of consolation are presented, in proportion to the number; there is a generous rivalry in administering to the general consolation, which receives its

reward in a more prompt and complete mastery over individual feeling: and, frequently, one rises above the rest, with all the authority of a prophet, to whose guidance all submit, and in the submission find employment for that redundant affection, the immediate object of which is now no more.

Of this we had a remarkable instance. The very member for whom, of all others, the rest were in deep anxiety when the stroke first came, lest she should sink under it, threw off, after the first burst, all her former weakness, and raised her head in firm serenity above the rest of the weeping circle, assuming, in singular contrast with her slight form and delicate appearance, a meek, yet dignified sovereignty, in administering to the consolation of the rest. And yet, among these were some who, one would have thought, should rather have administered to her. But so it is in all the visitations of our Blessed Lord; sorrow completely alters characters, or rather strips off the outward garb, and brings the real and interior man to view. The mighty fall, the lowly rise, the strength of man is laid prostrate, and the weakness of God stands firm.

We were now, amid our very tears, reaping

the plenteous harvest sown in previous obedience. Our house had not been that of the proud pharisee. Christ had not been entertained among us from ostentation, from the whim of the day, from cold compliance with the opinion of the world; but he had been ministered to with prayers and tears, and entire devotion, and he was now among us, as in the house of Lazarus, giving us all his sympathy, and assuring us that our sister was not dead, but only slept; and we experienced that feeling of calm, but inexpressible delight, which arises from an utter resignation into his hands, the brightness of whose past mercies our present affliction made more conspicuous than ever. We saw and acknowledged the benefit even of sorrow. It is thus that God's chastisement is distinguished from his vengeance.

It has often struck me as very strange, that, amid all the instruction given to our youth, the grandest, and yet commonest occasion in life, the hour of sorrow, is left totally unprovided for. I should rather say, perhaps, that wrong notions are indirectly instilled upon the subject: at least, I know that it requires a parent's constant care to counteract that admiration which

the boy, in his classical reading, imbibes of the heathen examples of fortitude. Such fortitude is assuredly vitally opposed to the true Christian spirit. It is the sulky patience which endures what it cannot avoid, the rebellious pride of the reptile which defies and hisses in the very act of being crushed. I thank God that my father especially provided against such a perversion of principle, and would earnestly warn all fathers and instructors of youth against its consequences. I have had occasion to witness them, and they are dreadful.

I retain a lively recollection of the first renewal of our communication with society after this affliction. The last part of our seclusion coincided, as I have mentioned, with Passion-week. By the time of its conclusion, its former serenity had again begun to diffuse itself over the family; and when we met on Easter-day, at the customary hour of morning prayer, all bore the evident impress of the joyful notions which the occasion of the day so powerfully inspires. We embraced each other, on rising from our knees, with a subdued, yet deep-felt gladness; and shortly after we prepared to quit the house of mourning for the first time, and

re-appear among our earthly friends at the customary rites of public worship.

It seemed, indeed, like a coming forth from the tomb. We had been long pent up where every thing was associated with death, in the missing of the one who was now no more. The last week had been dark and stormy, the day cheerless, and the silence of the night had been all along interrupted by the groaning of the trees in the wind. The narrow circuit of our morning walk daily presented the miserable spectacle of the ground strewn with the wrecks of the nests of the rooks, and here and there the callow young were lying, which had been shaken out by the violence of the tempest, and even occasionally a parent bird, which had been lashed to death, in the act of tending its endangered young, by the confliction of the tossing boughs.

But this morning, overflowing with such blissful associations, this, our Lord's own morning, came forth with the winds quite hushed, and the sky unclouded. The views were clear and bright, and seemed as if intended to unfold the world again, while the eye readily pierced up the long defiles of the distant glens, the outlets of our vale, and caught the falls of water

at their head, sparkling in the sun; and the distant barrier of mountains, which typified to us the outward world, seemed to woo us into it again by the extraordinary beauty they put on, in all the variety of tint, and strength of light and shade. Nature, too, in sympathy, as it were, with our feelings, had just burst forth from the tomb; at the beginning of our seclusion, not a flower, excepting the melancholy snowdrop, had come forth. But now the uplands and the meadows vied with each other in the plenty and beauty of their peculiar blossoms. On our way to church, we continually encountered the affectionate salútations of our neighbours; the returning world opened more and more upon us; and, arrived within the sacred walls, we felt once more gathered into the great family of mankind, and called to the resumption of those active duties which had been interrupted by our visitation, and ought now no longer to be deferred.

I.

WHAT IS AFFLICTION?

What is Affliction?—Speak, O man,
From sorrow's bruising rod,
That liftest up thy head to scan
The mazy paths of God?

It is the battering storm, which long
Vex'd Esdraelon's vale.
Hark! how the grateful reapers' song
Floats joyous on the gale.

It is the snow, with chilling flake
On Lebanon embost.
See, the bright gems of verdure break,
And nurse his bleating host.

It is the wintry wind, which smites
The bud of Sharon's rose,
With richer fragrance he invites,
With deeper crimson glows.

It is the pruning knife, that shears
Engaddi's rambling vine:
Half-bow'd his clustering load he bears,
And swells with purple wine.

O, great Vine-dresser! teach my heart
Thy searching knife to bear;
With every branch of pride to part,
And bless my prūner's care.

Yea! quell mine overgrown array,
And, if it be thy will,
Lop fortune, friends, and fame away,
For thou art with me still.

II.

THE OMEN.

I journey'd on, in gloomy thought,
Mine ears still ringing with adieu:
Then paus'd on the last hill that brought
My dear deserted home to view.
Across the vale, with towery span
Of brilliant arch, the rainbow ran,
And plung'd upon the earth,
Just where my well-directed eye,
'Mid the deep lustre, sought to spy
That spot of love and mirth.

Bath'd as it lay amid the glow
And radiance of that liquid woof,
Heaven seem'd along his glorious bow
To pour his treasures on our roof.
I hail'd the sight, the omen took,
And smil'd, and gave the last fond look,
And hope bright days was telling.
Months roll'd along—I came again,
And found the flattering omen vain:
It now was sorrow's dwelling.

But time soon read that omen right,
Fast on our heads woe's rain was driven;
But shortly rose a cheering light,
And ting'd it with the hues of heaven;
And resignation's holy balm,
And, potent every throb to calm,

Hope, Patience, Fortitude,
Descended on our bruised head;
Aloft our thankful hands we spread,
And own'd the Lord was good.

III.

THE LAST PROPHET.

Now, hear once more, insensate ear,
Thou dull of hearing, hear again:
And thou, forgetful bosom, bear
What thou so oft hast borne in vain.
My former warnings slighted all,
Now hear my last, my loudest call.

Look back upon thy life, survey,
And weep the while, its tortuous line:
A wilder'd labyrinth, whose way
Traverses every course but mine.
Doth not the painful sight appal?
Now hear my last, my loudest call.

Oft have I call'd. O think, tho' loth,
I have call'd in gladness, call'd in sorrow,
I have call'd 'mid study, call'd 'mid sloth,
I have call'd to-day, and call'd to-morrow;
Yet hast thou slighted me in all:
Now hear my last, my loudest call.

Yes! for a moment thou would'st strive,
And I with all my blessings sped;
But, when I stretch'd mine arms to give,
Fickle apostate! thou had'st fled.
Again thou rosest but to fall:
Now hear my last, my loudest call.

Oh! missing long, but yet not lost,
Oh! dying oft, but yet not dead,
Not always can my voice accost,
Nor can my tongue for ever plead.
I now address thee once for all,
It is my last, my loudest call.

Oh! ere my voice be weary, hear!
Oh! while my wrath still slumbers, wake!
Once more my heavenly gifts I bear,
Again invite thee to partake.
Quit, idler, quit thy battening stall,
It is my last, my loudest call.

IV.

"I DIE DAILY."

When on my pillow'd couch I lay,
Each night, this weary head of mine,
And think upon the by-gone day,
Its tangled thread of thought untwine,
I seem another life to leave,
And born at morn to die at eve.

Each day, O Father, is a life,
Each the great whole's epitome,
With passion stirr'd, with action rife,
Prank'd with capricious pain and glee.
Hours fly for years, nor growing age
Lacks here its monitory stage.

Morn from thy hand's renewing power
Brings me as from the womb again,
Fresh as the babe in natal hour,
Unsoil'd as yet with worldly stain.
My heart is calm, my breast is clear,
And lively to thy voice, my ear.

Then Noon, like manhood bears along,
Ah! far from innocence and home,
To push amid the worldly throng,
'Mid scenes of bustling guilt to roam,
And toil and care, and guile and sin,
O'erpower thy voice with deafening din.

Then Eve, meet type of mellowing age,
'Mid dying sounds, and growing calm,
Calls me to home, and musings sage.
Cool as her dews, thy spirit's balm
Pours on my fever'd heart, and full,
Thy voice on ears no longer dull.

Then Night, like death, as in the grave,
Lays down my aching head once more;
Blessing the bounteous hand which gave,
Praying the taker to restore,

I close upon the world my sight,
And sink amid surrounding night.

Great Giver of this mortal breath,
  Which thou hast rous'd again to sing,
Oh, thro' a daily life and death,
  Conduct me still, Almighty King!
Death to some sin my shame of yore,
Life to some grace unfelt before.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FAMILY CODE.

I was walking with my friend one day, and we had seated ourselves upon a turfy swell to enjoy the view. On rising up, we found that we had been trampling down a colony of ants, whose train was hurrying to and fro in apparent dismay at their calamity. My friend viewed silently, for some moments, the grievous havock which we had made in their little community, and then exclaimed, How thankfully ought we to feel the blessing of our station among God's creatures! See how hourly we trample beneath our feet, in ignorance or recklessness, millions of our inferior fellow-creatures. Perhaps every motion of ours is fatal to some one or other of them, and the lower world looks up in horror as we pass. But we can look up, and see no

tramplers on our heads. Our superiors are good and guardian angels, whose every motion is directed to our preservation and happiness by an all-present Saviour.

Notwithstanding the strong association which I had perceived in my friend's mind between things natural and spiritual, I could not help wondering at this rapid transition. I suppose a smile upon my countenance betrayed me, for smiling, as in return, with a look of extreme good nature, he said: I know that you are amused with the singularity of my observation, and verily believe have put me down for an enthusiast of no common stamp. Nevertheless, if I am singular now, I was not formerly; for this habit of thought I derived, with all the rest of my family, from my father, and not by passive inheritance, but by direct instruction. It was what he was anxious above all things to instil, making it the main support of the moral code which regulated the constitution of our household. Every household requires, for its very existence, some moral code, and I fear that the spirit of the codes which most generally prevail savours of little more than the adjustment of the dispositions and interests of the members. Such grow indeed with their growth, but it is

by continually taking in the loose and vague principles of the world with which the members daily enlarge their commerce, until at last they assimilate their system in every feature to its corrupt code, and the children are but too truly the children of this world. In other families, this code may be placed on a strictly moral basis, but unless this also rest on one wider and firmer still, it will fail in the day of trial to support the weight imposed upon it. No! the father must be father not only of their bodies, not only of their minds, but of their spirits too. His moral code must be an essential part of the religion of his household, must be the body of which this is the soul, a daily practical comment on the spiritual exercise of daily prayer, and by inculcating motives superior to the paltriness of worldly interests, produce that loftiness of thought, and firmness of moral nerve, which alone can carry the Christian victorious to the conclusion of his career. Such was my father's system. He would allow no one principle of those which were daily rising up among us on our mutual dealings to remain in the frail and corrupt nature which produced it, amiable though that nature may oftentimes appear. He was never satisfied till he had

completely founded it anew, as on a second nature, on the spirit of the gospel. Wherever it was possible, he would anticipate the results of nature itself by inweaving into our minds such habits of thought and feeling, that our mutual dealings, as by collision, struck out at once the principles, which were their natural result, in the exact mould of the gospel, and, in proportion to our growth, these of course came forth more and more perfect; so that our code, far from assuming more and more the character of the world, as it opened upon us, receded further and further from it, and grew more accordant with the spirit of the world to come. To such an end, it was necessary on every occasion to refer us to some precept or doctrine, or fact of the gospel, so that by degrees we saw and imbibed its whole practical scope. Our affection grew into that unshaken love, which is due to that love with which Christ hath loved us, our good nature into that lively charity, which thinks well and acts well, from a continual sense of the unbounded mercies which we have received, and of which we are stewards, in order to impart to others our diffidence into that meekness which becomes a fellow-sinner, our high spirits into that calm

but deep joy which becomes the redeemed, the naturally obstinate were improved into examples of patience, the warm and sanguine refined into holders of a lively and animated faith, and the phlegmatic and wary into the sober, watchful, and cautious against offence.

Framed as it thus was, our code had no isolated point. A spirit pervaded the whole, which brought all into harmony, gave all an unity of purpose. Thus was left no room for doubt; each principle was supported above and below, on this side and on that, by all the rest; and when one motive was excited, it was immediately surrounded by a host of others, which bore with concentrated force upon the object. With what an overwhelming weight was impressed that duty so continually demanded in a family, the mutual forgiveness of faults. There was the love of our Lord, there was his example, there was his especial precept, there was his general command to do as we would be done by, and not to judge that we may not be judged; there was the duty of mastering every passion in order to the victory over the world, and the offender (besides being of the same natural father) was a fellow in sin, a fellow in redemption, a brother in Christ. It is true, that each of

these motives was not distinctly seen; nevertheless, they past through our bosom as really as each syllable of a word must be taken into the eye, though, through habit, we feel unconscious of the act. Never was a code better guarded from violation. We had not been our own legislators, nor modelled it after our own caprice and passion, which would have given us the right to alter it accordingly. It was God's own will and law, unalterable by will of man.

Of course, no act under such a system could be trifling; it came under the influence of one and the same spirit with the most dignified: none could be indifferent, for it obtained point and direction from its numerous associations with all that was important; and our quick-sightedness thus formed, could discern a train of consequences traversing the circle of our home, growing stronger as it proceeded, and ending in some awakening result. Our acts of childhood, which, if any, belong to this class of trifling or indifferent, we were enabled to discern, as we grew up, not to have been so; we felt every moment their important results. Thus we were guarded against an insidious and sure cause of laxity of principle, and each act, as done by us, was viewed as uttered in the church

of Christ, affecting some member of the body of Christ, performed by a servant of Christ, and connected by an uninterrupted series with that eternity which had been promised by Christ. Oh! how my dear father deprecated the usage of such a term as an indifferent action! He banished it with indignation from our vocabulary. Would Heaven that it were banished from every other! Its admission is the cause of almost all the crimes and misfortunes of society, and the philosopher (shame to him!) who has employed it, has shewn thus his ignorance both of human nature, and of the spirit of the gospel, and has been a corrupter rather than teacher of morals.

My friend here paused. We had been standing hitherto, in consequence of the mischief which our sitting had done to the poor ants. We now altered our situation to another spot, where, after seating ourselves, he continued to regard with a musing eye the fine horizon spread out before us. In a few moments he resumed:

Observe yonder blue ridge. It requires, as seems to me, some experience and attention to distinguish it from the sky, against which it appears like a layer of clouds. Even such is the view of indifferent actions taken by the man

of blunted moral vision, even thus indistinct, thus untrue; and the blot at which he stops, as the termination of mental vision, is to the truly Christian moralist full of lively circumstance.

You may, however, object that with all the quickness of vision to which we may have been thus habituated, still my father must have left many cases unprovided for, since the acutest discernment, however highly disciplined, must, in our imperfect nature, be often baffled in deciding amid conflicting circumstances to which class, good or bad, to refer an action. He did not deny this, yet still left us amply provided. Whenever, he said, a question appears thus nicely balanced, (it can be of course but in appearance, for no action is intrinsically neutral,) be assured that the equality is made by your own interest and feelings being unwittingly thrown into the scale. Take, therefore, this rule, delivered by an excellent father of our church: "Always, in a case of doubt, choose the side which you find least agreeable." Thus you are certain of choosing the right, and at the same time gain a victory over your own corrupt inclinations. There can be no danger from indifferent actions thus treated; on the contrary, they give us additional moral strength.

Our family code then was simple, clear, unalterable. He that ran might read, and it possessed an authority, beyond all, awful and compulsory. The person, therefore, who offended, offended indeed grievously, and deep was the penitence which ensued. The offender was left without any excuse of the action being trifling or indifferent, he had none around him who would sympathize with him, and support him, with a view to establish a principle which might excuse some deed of their own, either past or in contemplation. As soon as ever the first burst of passion was over, he found himself alone; he had leisure to regain his usual quickness of moral sight. He then saw the consequences of what he had done, both as affecting himself and others. He had violated the peace and sanctity of Christ's household, he had inflicted a stain upon his own conscience, he had set a stumbling-block in the way of those who were most near and dear to him. He felt that he had set himself apart, as by a leprosy, from the rest; shut himself out from his father's spiritual household. He was an exile, and a castaway. But no sooner was the sincerity of these feelings discerned, than the whole family rose to meet him with comfort and encouragement, and

give him the kiss of peace and reconciliation, and after his contrite acknowledgment had been expressed to my father, and his voice had been heard heartily joining in the general confession at the next time of family prayer, the past was clean forgotten, the broken circle recovered its integrity, and there was joy, as among the angels of Heaven.

You will now, I think, (continued he,) resuming his smile, no longer be surprised at my rapid transition from the vilest things below to the highest above. The aim and tendency of our code was to associate earthly things with heavenly, to use the former as notices to the consideration of the latter, and to measure the holiness of every thought and deed by the number of pure and heavenly associations which it brought together. I love to seek these combinations. They take me out of the narrow and monotonous range of outward sense, of earthly feelings, and the most copious source of my bliss below is due, under the gospel, to the spirit and precepts of our family code.

I have subjoined two short pieces in verse, which my friend gave me to illustrate what he had been saying, as specimens of the manner in which the most trifling circumstances were

turned to account in this family, and made the vehicle of all that can be awful or interesting.

I.

THE CAPTIVE LET LOOSE.

Poor trembling creature, why this haste?
  Thine attitude, half prayer, half threat;
Thine eyes in fearful glances cast,
  As if some monster thou hadst met.
A moment I must hold my prize,
For e'en in thee some lesson lies.

We are no longer what we were;
  The stamp divine, which all thy race
Was taught to love and to revere,
  Is gone: sin glareth in its place.
How well the hideous mark ye know,
And fly in loathing fright, as now.

Oh! I am humbled—fellow-man
  May shun, nor give a moment's smart;
Nay, I can smile beneath his ban,
  But thou dost stir both head and heart:
No whim, no worthless pride sways thee,
Instinctive horror bids thee flee.

Thy race was happy once, no foe
  In all creation's range it knew;

Man sinn'd, and at one fatal blow
The delegated world o'erthrew.
Those pangs his presence now confess,
Stern ruiner of thy happiness.

Thro' him thy race an outlaw liveth,
Perils thy very birth surround;
Thro' him thy throbbing heart misgiveth,
At every sight, at every sound:
The day is full of cares and fright,
And big with terrors is the night.

I would not hurt thee, would not add
A throb to that large sum of pain,
Which thou for my default hast had.
Oh! it would deeper die the stain
Which lays my vanity so low.
Go, then: in safety, trembler, go.

II.

THE MONITOR.

My faithful comrade! oft in thee,
When pride is still and passion cold,
A faithful monitor I see,
Example for myself behold,
And feel the chiding blushes flame,
That by my dog am put to shame.

I mark how thou each morn dost run,
Hastening, with joyous bark, to greet
Thy Master on another sun,
And lick in fond salute my feet;
While I of him that all supplies,
My Master, reckless, thankless rise.

How, when thou could'st not understand
My moody whim, I have struck thee sore,
And thou hast kiss'd the ruthless hand,
As gay, as grateful as before;
While, tho' he justly smite, I grow
But more rebellious from the blow.

How thou would'st follow, and entreat
To take thee with me; and where'er
I led, fatigue itself was sweet,
And peril scorn'd, so I were there;
While I of him ne'er pray'd to guide,
From all his paths have turn'd aside.

How from thy foot when I have drawn
The thorn which wrought thy little woe,
Thou would'st in answer kiss and fawn,
Could'st ne'er sufficient thanks bestow.
Death's sting he drew for me, and still
No thanks ascend, I spurn his will.

How when in wood or grassy nook,
Wearied, a resting place I have found,
Thou would'st with jealous bark and look
Defend the consecrated ground;
While I have seen, unmov'd, unpain'd,
His bounds transgress'd, his courts profan'd.

CHAPTER X.

THE MOTHER.

A CUSTOM prevailed at Valehead, and throughout its neighbourhood, which ever appeared to me very beautiful and affecting. If, in the dusk of Easter Eve, your way happened to lie through the churchyard, you would perceive figures, each equipped with a lantern and a basket, flitting from spot to spot through the gloom. If a stranger, you would most probably take them for the wives of the fishermen, procuring worms, and so pass on without further consideration. But the morning would reveal to you a very different employment. You would see every grave, whose tenant had one unforgetful heart still left above ground, profusely decked with the choicest flowers of this most interesting of seasons. The whole churchyard puts a holiday

smile over its mouldering surface, and every chaplet-strewn mound seems to invite you to admiration, and in a note of triumph to cry out for its owner, "We are not nothing. We still exist, and shall rise again, even as our Lord upon this day rose again."

On the Easter day first ensuing after my friend's arrival in the country, I observed a grave thus dressed, which, ever since I had known the place, had hitherto lain in melancholy neglect, most piteously contrasted with its gaily drest neighbours. Upon enquiry, I learned that the grave contained the mother of a sailor, who, after an absence of many years, had but a few days ago returned to the place of his birth. I pointed it out to my friend, who, after regarding it for some time with a musing look, and then throwing a hasty glance at the chancel where the family vault lay, took my arm, and, according to custom, accompanied me for the length of two or three fields on my way homeward. I confess that I had a design in thus directing his attention. Hitherto, in his conversations with me, he had dwelled almost exclusively upon the part which his father assumed in the government of his household. I was curious to elicit from him something respecting

the part assigned to the mother, and had now, methought, laid a successful train; nor was I disappointed.

He began, however, as usual, with remarks upon the service of the day. I have always been struck, he said, alluding to the gospel for the day, with the part which women bear in the history of our Lord's sojourn upon earth. We find a faithful little troop of them clinging round him to the last, even when men had lost all courage, and forsaken him. They attend at his cross, they wait upon his sepulchre, and they are accordingly honoured with being made the first witnesses of the resurrection. It seems as if all had been designed to enforce the sense of the completeness of our restoration, since woman, who first sinned and incurred death, was thus first presented with the visible, palpable pledge of everlasting life; and it is observable that wherever the gospel is maintained in its purity, there woman is in full enjoyment of all her native rights and dignity. Hence it is, that the Christian alone, at least in my view, possesses a home,* and our Saviour, in the course

* Is not this remark confirmed by the fact, that the least religious people in Europe is also the least domestic?

of effecting our eternal happiness, has established for us the greatest of earthly blessings. For without a mother maintained in due honour, upheld in all her dignity, invested with her proper sway, home cannot exist. Tending to the same point is another remarkable fact, which, so far from being an accidental feature of our Lord's history, has always appeared to me essential and designed. We hear nothing of his reputed father after his childhood, while his mother is prominently put forward, and, even after his ascension to heaven, she is carefully mentioned as present with her female companions at the first assembly of his infant church. The Father's authority, indeed, needed no additional ratification; but what a sanction, what a sanctity, is thus imposed upon the mother's; and how more highly still should we think of it, when we feel that it is very much through his conversation with his mother and her companions, that our Lord's character comes invested to us with that human tenderness which gives us confidence, notwithstanding his divine unutterable majesty, to call upon him as our Mediator with an assurance of his sympathy. This sanction seems still more marked, on comparing our Lord's ministry with that of Moses; that of the

latter is all stern, masculine injunction, unbroken by a trait of female softness, all cold, majestic publicity. The contrast, indeed, was fitting between a covenant of grace and a covenant of penalty, between a covenant which carried on the promise of the seed of the woman, and the covenant which gave that seed.

In this blessed covenant, then, which we enjoy, the mother has been restored to all her legitimate sovereignty; and great and incalculable is her influence. Like some fine concentrated perfume, it penetrates with potent, but invisible, agency, every nook of home, pervading where the coarser authority of the father could never reach: it begins with the first breath we draw, with the first light we see. On her were fixed our first affections, from her we received the first food, on her lap spoke the first words, thought the first thought, read the first letter, and, with our hands clasped in hers, offered our first prayer. In all that we ever after think or know, we are immediately referred to her who furnished us with their elements. Under her rule it was that we enjoyed what now appears to have been the only period of unalloyed happiness, and from underneath her warm and sheltering wing were taken to the first taste of

anxiety and toil, and transferred to the comparatively stern control of the father, or still sterner discipline of the school. Nor ceases even her direct influence then; it revives at intervals in all its original freshness and strength of hold; often, after the lapse of many maturing years, when sickness makes us children again, in her we seek a refuge, once more experience her unwearied attention; and pain is deprived of half its sting by the renewal of that nursing care to which, as bliss for ever gone by, our memory has so often and so fondly reverted. Having received this power in common from nature, my mother eagerly laid hold of the blessed privilege and office of good which the gospel has assigned. God had originally given to her, she considered, dominion over the child's heart, and now, through the gospel, has given to her dominion over every wild passion, every beast of the field, as it were, throughout its regions; there she must clear the wilderness, there erect the temple of the living God. She reflected that if the first mother was the author of sin, the Christian mother has been gloriously endowed with ample means of remedy, and that remedy, for her own salvation no less than of her child, she is in duty bound to apply. In

her, the gospel should find one of its most efficient preachers; one endued with that gift of tongue, whose every accent reaches the child's inmost bosom; one who not only addresses the affections, but is the very first to call them into existence; who has to speak to no seared conscience and blunted feelings, but to the flexible freshness of the yet soft and innocent heart. She is the first object of the child's love, esteem, reverence, obedience, and occupies for a certain time the whole of that head and heart, which is soon to be devoted to God's service: him she represents for a season; and let her take heed lest she usurp his place, and continue her child's affections on earthly objects, after his mind shall have become capable of appreciating heavenly. Alas! how many a fond indulgent mother has wept the consequences of such idolatry, and discovered, when too late, that she has been sitting, as God, in God's temple. She must render unto God the things that are God's, and labour incessantly in forming the infant mind, so that the love, the reverence, the obedience, which she now inspires for herself, shall be but the rude elements of the love, the reverence, the obedience, which he shall hereafter pay to the Almighty Father. Oh, how beautifully

holy is a mother, thus employed, how blessed her house! Like Mary's,* it contains the infant church of Christ; and, oh! like Mary, let her not hesitate to stand at his cross, and, crucifying all over-fond affection, firmly discipline her child, in due season, to crucify his also.

Such a mother was mine; and, if you have heard from me on this subject less than you expected, it is because the notions are so inwoven into every portion of my mind, that I feel a difficulty in detaching them, and clothing them in words: where we think or feel most, there we always speak least.

Her place can never be supplied: none but she can obtain that entire intimacy with our hearts; in her loss, the father feels at once a link broken between him and his children; she forms the softening medium between his masculine control, and their tender years. The father may instruct, but the mother must instil; the father may command our reason, but the mother compels our instinct; the father may finish, but the mother must begin. In a word, were I to draw a general distinction, without

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* Acts xii. 12.

particular attention to accuracy, I should say, that the empire of the father was over the head, of the mother over the heart.

To our mother was always addressed the first letter after our departure from home; to her, imparted the account of any novelties which had excited our admiration; to her, the first tidings of any success; to her, who was the first planter of the bosom, we offered its first-fruits. The thought of her, during our absence, brought us comfort; and her sweet and quiet image, conjured up by our longing imagination, gave us the prominent idea of home, round which all the rest clustered. We could bring, by force of fancy, into our ears her gentle voice, leading the responses at family prayers, and dwelling with all the yearning of affectionate entreaty on the Amen, which closed the prayer put up for the welfare of the young absentees. The foreground of the picture of the anticipated joy of our return always presented her coming forth with our sisters to meet us. Arriving from a bustling noisy world, what a delightful contrast of calm we then experienced. Supposing the degree of piety the same, the woman always exhibits it in a more engaging view than the man. It seems in her more innate and less

earthly; some of the sweetest of the gospel graces are hers almost by inheritance. Angelic meekness, faithful affection, enduring patience, uncomplaining resignation, having free play by her retirement from the passion-stirring and tumultuous scenes of life, grow up in her to most enviable ripeness. In the moment, therefore, in which we met this dear little procession, how perfect seemed the calm: nor was this a little augmented by a sense of deficiency and corresponding feeling of humility, which soon afterwards arose in our bosoms. When we looked upon, and conversed with, our sisters, who had all along enjoyed the peculiar care of our mother, from which ourselves had been so early torn away, and saw fully expanded in them, in all sweetness and beauty, what she had once implanted also in us, but a boisterous world had subsequently stunted in growth, we were warned of the distance at which we stood from the standard of Christian excellence. They were monuments to us of what we ourselves had once been, and told us that we had need become as little children again, before we could attain that standard. We learned from them how much of the world still remained to be subdued, how very much was required to be

achieved before we could bring each irregular and impatient feeling into due submission to the gospel of peace.

We had now arrived at the entrance of a wood, through which a secluded path ran to the garden-gate at the back of the Manor-house. We here parted.

MY MOTHER.

My Mother! when in some blest hour
Health bursts into his brightest flower,
And all I feel in me is rife
And instinct with thy gift of life,
Which in its thousand rivers flowing,
Through every vein is bounding, glowing,
When the full tide of thought, that courses
'Twixt outward shapes and inward sources,
In beating pulse, from every part,
Throbs with impetuous rush and dart,
Thro' limb, ear, eye, unto the heart,
Body and spirit, quick and free,
Shouting in joyous harmony,
"God! what a blessing 'tis to be!"
Ah! 'mid the concert of my bliss
How soon two wonted sounds I miss,
Two sounds, now lost, alas! on earth,
Two sounds, which from my early birth,

More musical than any other,
Rose 'mid the anthem—son and mother.
Yet two remain, to raise their tone
When e'en our very graves are gone,
Two blessed sounds, if sounds they be,
Which, like a fragrance, silently
From the soul's inmost chambers rise,
When spirit unto spirit cries;
For thou wast, with thy pure control,
My eldest sister in the soul,
And I thy infant brother, given
Into thy short-liv'd charge by heaven,
And our great Mother, from whose womb
Spirits of race immortal come.
How would'st thou teach my lip and tongue
To lisp her speech, to sing her song,
Though native words would often baulk
Her little stranger's broken talk,
Or, in unwonted clusters join'd,
Her letters would perplex his mind.
Or thou would'st lead me round her halls,
Sum all her bulwarks, count her walls,
Her towers, by warding angels held,
Her gates by angels centinell'd,
Her base by rocky buttress staid,
On prophets and apostles laid,
Thence bid me gaze aloft, where shone
The all-cementing corner-stone:
How would'st thou look with fearful gaze,
When I was treading slippery ways,
Thy little stumbler's fall arrest,
And press him closer to thy breast.

Blest nurse! blest teacher! and blest guide!
Well was thy dutcous task supplied
In ministry so fair, so good,
Thy girlhood grew to womanhood:
When, warm'd by brighter calls away,
Thou on thy mother's breast didst lay
Thy fondled charge of many a year,
With many a sigh, and many a tear,
And many a parting kiss sincere.
For nought in thee was cold or slack,
Nor didst thou give a changeling back.
O, call'd to loftier station, thou
Art in her upper chambers now,
Where, gather'd in communion sweet,
Angels, and saints, and martyrs, meet:
Where all the glorious hierarchy
Chaunt at the sapphire throne on high,
All that for fadeless crowns have striven,
And all the eldest-born of heaven,
Spirits of the perfected just,
Freed from the soil of mortal dust,
That gather round the newly come,
Welcoming long-lost brothers home.
There, infant's foot must never tread;
O, then, to manhood fast be sped
My lingering years; months, days, bestow
Your kindly increase as ye flow,
Fill, as ye pass, the imperfect plan,
To full-grown stature rear the man,
That I within that blissful door
May enter, meet, and part no more.
E'en now, methinks, my curious ear
Some heavenly strains can overhear.

In the deep silence of my breast
Accents, now long on earth supprest,
Soar o'er the notes that swell and fall
From founts of thought most musical.
I recognize them, line by line,
And, O my mother, they are thine!
Thine, which so oft with wholesome shock
Have cloven my bosom's flinty rock,
And floods gush'd forth ; and faith's pure beam
With a bright rainbow spann'd the stream.
Thine, which, when oft my breast hath stood
In sullen pools of morbid mood,
Have flung the branch of sweetness in,
And heal'd the bitterness of sin.
Thine, which, when passion's wave and wind
Were foundering my frail bark of mind,
Have utter'd, at thy Master's will,
The calm rebuke, and all was still.
O, felt in all I think or know,
Mother! thou speakest, livest now.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE FAMILY.

The discipline of the church of Christ, as displayed in its censures and excommunication, must have been very effective while it was flourishing in its primitive visible unity and purity. She was not then divided into separate independent bodies, holding no communication with each other, which might enable an offender, when expelled from one to attach himself to another, and thus maintain, in defiance of his condemners, an outward union with Christ. He might as well have endeavoured to escape the penalties of rebellion against the head of the Roman empire by removing from one province to another. So spotless, too, was her innocence, so bright her holiness, that none dared question for a moment the justice of her decisions; and

her sentence, however rigorous it might be, was deemed to be ratified in heaven; to be cut off from her, was effectually to be cut off from Christ. Thus, both her blessings and her censures were an outward expression, an earthly type, by which men were warned of what judgment was proceeding in heaven upon their conduct of life, and her slowness of forgiveness, and the fiery probation to which she submitted the penitent, were well calculated to dispel those hurtful notions which men now so generally entertain of the ease and speed of the process of forgiveness of sins. They could not then judge of that process from the quick pliability of their internal feelings, and the suddenness with which they can pass from like to dislike, from joy to sorrow; they could not mistake transitory alteration of purpose for real change of heart. The church did not take them back so suddenly as that they should not be relieved from this delusion; and still less could they think all accomplished as soon as the change had begun: she demanded restoration and satisfaction to the utmost which could be given, before she would re-admit the offender to his forfeited privileges. Every day, some example of this kind was passing before the eyes of men, and they saw, they learned,

and they trembled. Lost, however, as this glorious discipline is in the universal church by the dissolution of its visible unity, lost in every particular church from corruption, from the interference of the temporal power, and various other causes, it still survives in all its integrity in that department of Christ's body which is occupied by a family. There is unity, there is holiness, there no power of the world can interfere. Thence none has liberty to withdraw himself to another portion of Christ's body; he cannot therefore laugh to scorn her penalties; all that she thinks fit to impose he must undergo. Her uncompromising rigour can neither be bought off by money, soothed by influence, repelled by power, nor disarmed by the magistrate; her censures come immediately upon the offender's head, in the face of the whole assembled church, with a voice which can be heard by every son, and her excommunication exists in all its primitive vigour and reality.

The lowest species of this latter punishment is sufficiently dreadful to a feeling heart; so bitter a draught, even to boisterous boyhood, as never to be willingly brought within the reach of possibility again to the person who has once tasted of it. The exclusion from the usual

assembling of prayer, which was a form of it employed (though very seldom) by my father, conveyed a commination which indeed was effectual, and sharper than a two-edged sword, penetrating to the joints and marrow, and searching the thoughts and purposes of the heart. The offender found himself in a state of spiritual separation from the dearest and purest objects of his affections below, from those on whom all the comforts of his existence depended; and not only in the face of man, but also before God; not only in reference to this world, but with regard to the world to come; he felt himself cut off by the very roots from earth, but, alas! not transplanted into heaven. He could look for no society to receive him, except that of the evil spirits who had seduced him from his allegiance to his earthly and to his heavenly Father. To add to the bitterness of his heart, he could overhear the voice of praise and thanksgiving which proceeded from the temple, whence he, as profane, was excluded; he could hear the blessing pronounced on all present, and which fell not upon himself; he could catch the sound of their rising at the conclusion, and then how painful was the reflection on the satisfaction which he used to enjoy at that moment, when he had

once again appeared before his God in company with the beloved of his heart.

Though certain to forgive on sincere repentance, and sure to forget as clean as he forgave freely, my father was slow to express his forgiveness upon these occasions. He would by no means take the penitent back again in the same moment that his change of heart became visible. He rather left him under the influence of such powerful and healing feelings as accompany the moment, for a time sufficient to allow him to lay open with their unsparing sword the darkest recesses of his own heart, and thus to gain that knowledge of his weakness which henceforward might render him strong. The penitent is too often quite as ready to forget his offence as his pardoner can be, and thus to lose the better half of the fruits of repentance: against this, therefore, my father's delay effectually provided. At the same time, to impress us with a due sensibility to the difficulty of pardon from heaven, he made the restoration of the penitent no simple and speedy process. He demanded the most explicit acknowledgment, the most unfeigned submission, before the face of the church of home, before he allowed the pardoned rebel to take his station in the circle of worship-

pers, and join in the general confession. Nor would he allow the penitence of the offender, however unequivocally expressed, to be, of itself, available to the procuring of forgiveness. He required, in addition, the earnest intercession of the rest in his favour, and thus not only called into holy exercise the best feelings of their hearts, and caused them to sympathize deeply with his sorrow, but also, by placing in a most prominent view before our youthful eyes the nature and power of intercession, taught us to appreciate the office of our blessed Redeemer in his mediation between holy God and unholy man.

Thus, the whole discipline of home brought God continually before our eyes; neither the fear nor the love of him ceased to be present with us. We looked upon its economy as faithfully representing to us his will, and if we could not be secure of standing well with him from standing well with our family, we were certain that we stood ill with him when we stood ill with our family.

I.

THE RETURN.

Again, O Lord, with weeping face,
With burning cheek, and heaving breast,
I come before thy dwelling place,
And crave once more thy wonted rest.
Where hast thou been?—Oh! do not ask
'Tis an intolerable task
To bring it but to mind.
Oh! how shall I endure to hear,
While my pale lips confess in fear
Desertion so unkind.

I have been in regions far away,
Far from thy true and steady light,
Where false and borrow'd was the day,
And false the splendour of the night;
Where all was false, and all untrue,
All mock'd the touch, deceiv'd the view,
And joy itself a care
To hide the hideous guest within,
False looks, false words, false hope, and sin
Alone substantial there.

Strange meats I ate, strange drinks I drank,
Strange speech I heard, strange sights I saw,
Strange thoughts within me rose and sank,
Most strange, most alien from thy law.
Strange joy I had—by fear subdued:
Strange pleasure felt—by pain ensued:

Strange knowledge—'twas of sin.
Oh! I have found, and found in pain,
All strange from thee is false and vain:
Kind Master! take me in.

II

THE RECOVERY.

God! when to seek thy long-lost face
The weeping wanderer turns again,
Explores in vain the wonted place,
Untwines each clue of thought in vain,
Thro' realms of love, of hope, of fear,
Where'er he look, thou art not there:

Thou wilt not, in this solitude,
Leave him for ever lost and parted;
For ever hide thy face, exclude
All comfort from the broken-hearted?
"Oh, no!" I hear a voice reply
Amid the wilderness, "draw nigh."

Groping and stumbling, towards the sound
I come. Ah! reckless sin hath long
Buried the track, the memory drown'd
Of those blest paths I knew when young,
When thou didst beam where'er I sought;
Thou wast the beacon to each thought.

Ah me! the veil is on my sight—
Thick—palpable—which, year by year,
Sin hath been weaving day and night;
Tear it away, great Saviour, tear.
Bid me again thy light explore,
Free, unincumber'd, as before.

Now as I speak I catch the rays,
E'en as the pole-star oft will swim
Uncertain to the sailor's gaze,
Floating 'mid clouds and vapours dim.
And tho', to fix its flickering glare
Exceed my power, I know 'tis there.

I know 'tis there, and ask no more—
But, trusting thy good hour to win,
When with a steady blaze shall pour
That light, so long denied to sin,
Work on in cheerful hope; thy care
Hath never slighted faithful prayer.

It fixes!—brightens!—all around
Breaks into day!—warm beams pervade
My torpid breast, the lost is found,
Tenfold the long drear night repaid!
Again before thy blazing seat
I fall, and worship at thy feet.

III.

THE BLIND MAN.

Blind *Bartimæus! day and night
I muse on thee, and hail my mate,
As, quench'd by sin my inward sight,
On life's dark road I weep and wait;
And every passenger implore,
And every answer proves the more
Man's help how weak and vain.
But hark! I hear the Lord go by,
The mighty Saviour—"hear my cry,
List to my suppliant strain,
Hear, Son of David, my appeal,
Have mercy on me, stay and heal."

With angry words the world without
Chides my importunate address;
But no! still louder will I shout,
My prayer more urgent will I press,
"Thou glorious Son of David, stay,
Chase, chase these blinding films away:"
O hark! he pauses—turns—
Touches—my walls of darkness nod—
They fall—'tis day!—my King, my God
This film-purg'd eye discerns:
Prostrate, in thanks and reverence meet,
I fall, and kiss his blessed feet.

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* Mark, x. 46.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIRST MARRIAGE IN THE FAMILY.

I was coming one morning out of my church, after having performed the ceremony of marriage to a couple, when I beheld my friend just entering the churchyard. The little bridal procession respectfully saluted him as it passed, and he returned the salute with the marks of his usual kindness and affability. When they had gone by, he turned and gazed at them for some time with fixed earnestness. When he came up to me, he said, that procession in white, which has just crossed my path, brings vividly to my recollection one of the earliest events of our family, the marriage of my eldest sister. It left a deep impression upon my mind. I have her figure now, even at this moment, visibly before me as she stood at the altar arrayed in snowy

white, and there was recited the passage of St. Paul, which declares the union of husband and wife to be typical of the mystical unity between Christ and his church. She became from that instant sanctified in my eyes, and her lovely innocent countenance and snow-white raiment, to which I knew that the purity of her bosom perfectly corresponded, embodied to me in a lively representation that church without spot or wrinkle, holy and unblamed. She was no barren spouse of Christ, offered up in mockery of our natural feelings by a cruel superstition; but in her I could contemplate the mother of many sons of God to come, the teacher of his children, the sacred depository of the milk of his holy gospel. All trace of Eve and our fallen nature seemed vanished; she bore the stamp of the Eve of promise, whose sons, by the help of the mighty Conqueror who had gone before, should bruise the serpent's head, even as he bruised their heel. Through what a peculiar series of thoughts, what a solemn train of feelings, do the words of the Apostle lead us from this outward and every-day rite, taking our sight away from vulgar objects, and fixing it, through this lovely medium, upon the great ark of our salvation, the church of God, directing the mind

in one comprehensive glance backward to prophesy, and forward to fulfilment, and bidding us in the dearest of our natural connexions look on to the most precious of our spiritual. Thus, in this, as in every other instance, the gospel lays its sanctifying hand upon each act and incident, and refines it to purest spirit.

On such considerations as these passing through my bosom, I became conscious of standing in a new relation to the church of Christ, brother as I was to one who was destined to give it increase, and contribute to perpetuate its visible duration through a glittering succession of prophets, confessors, and martyrs, to the end of time. And most strange have I ever since thought it, that men should be so generally deaf to the spiritual call announced in this event of life, and leave to death the sole privilege of pointing their thoughts heavenward; that the hour of joy should be less fruitful in the heart's holy motions than that of sorrow. But, so it is; reckless selfish beings as we are, we never approach God but when compelled by need; we think of him indeed, and pray earnestly when he smites, but turn away when he would embrace.

On that day I lost another sister; for, certainly, that term became now inapplicable to her

in the full sense in which I had hitherto employed it. Her heart could no longer be given up to us whole and undivided: she was now a wife. I could no longer approach her with my former reckless playfulness: she was now the matron. She was endued with the ensigns of parental royalty, a reverence mixed itself with my affection, if it did not displace a corresponding portion of it, and I became insensibly imbued with somewhat of the feelings of a subject. O my friend, if a change of station like this can so influence our mutual affections below, how will they stand after the grand and final change to which all others are but introductory and typical, beyond which all is immutability. But let me not encroach upon your attention by entering upon a thriftless speculation.

You will suppose that the hour of my sister's departure would, in a family so united, where every member had so definite a place assigned, be one of proof and trial. So, indeed, it was. My sister could not but be aware that she was going from a tried to an untried state, that she was leaving those with whom love was co-extensive with life, for him with whom it was but as yesterday. To add to her regret, we were on this day met in our full numbers, and home

seemed to put on all its charms to mock her. Our neighbours, too, with whom she was justly popular, were collected in crowds at the gate; on every side familiar faces presented themselves, to be shortly supplanted by strange countenances—all which she was going to abandon seemed to unite in upbraiding her, by putting on the most inviting appearance; the very flowers of the garden seemed confederates in the general conspiracy.

She was going through the several members of the family with her mournful adieu, and had just quitted the embrace of her mother, the last embrace of fostering protection, and dearly loved and duly appreciated authority, when, suddenly, a loud peal rang from the neighbouring steeple to proclaim that the envied bride was proceeding from her father's home. The sound seemed to strike on her heart as heavy as his passing-bell to the prisoner on his way to execution. She would have fallen had she not caught hold of my father, on whom she supported herself, sobbing and shedding tears. My dear child, he cried as he gently released her twining arms, this I know is to thee a bitter hour. Poor mortal, it is thy first change, and thou art for the first time quitting known for unknown. Yet, what a slight

foretaste is this of a time to come. Thou now exchangest a father for a husband; hereafter thou shalt leave a husband for an everlasting Lord. Take courage, therefore, and anticipate some of that fortitude which thou must needs summon up at thy last day, of which this is the warning figure. Come, lift up thine head, and remember the high station to which the holy church hath this day advanced thee. Thou hast been called from the lowly estate of a child to be a Christian matron, from a handmaid to be mistress of a household. Thou hast been taken from the troop of attendant virgins, and admitted into the holy company of the typical spouses of Christ. Dost thou not remember what words were addressed to thy prototype? "Hearken, O daughter, and consider and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. So shall the king have pleasure in thy beauty, for he is the Lord thy God, and worship thou him."—(Psalm xlv. 11, 12.) Yea, my dear child! forget thy father's house, forget the daily satisfaction of thy love and duty towards us, though never can we forget in return thy unalterable sweetness, thy affectionate attention, thy unintermitted offices of kindness. Yea, forget all here except that one thing which alone

shall survive all change, the knowledge of Christ which here thou hast acquired. O thou type of his blessed church, O thou image of his spiritual spouse, remember that, as she is the mother of pure and holy children, such also must thou be. Thou must be the mother of Abel, and not of Cain; thou must add champions to the host of God, and not revellers to the rout of Belial. Go forth, then, with a portion more precious than ten thousand times the worldly goods with which I send thee forth endowed; carry out with thee the economy of a godly household. Induce thy husband (if indeed he need to be induced) to unite with thee, heart and hand, in this labour of love, so that the house of thy sojourn be not less holy than that whence thou shalt have come. Let no descendant of mine bring discredit on my instructions, nor sorrow to my grey hairs. I have earnestly, and ever, prayed God that he would of all trials spare me this; and, therefore, I charge thee in his blessed name, before his holy angels, and by all which thou hast received from me in body and in soul, for this life and for the life to come, diligently to watch, labour, and do the utmost which in thee lies, to avert so lamentable, so shameful a consequence. But whither am I running? Pardon, dear daughter, the excess of

my love and jealousy for my Master's honour, which have led me unwittingly to address thee in words approaching too nearly to an upbraiding strain. Oh, whom in this world can I trust, if not thee, thee the help and comfort of so many years—Farewell!—Ah, poor child! it is indeed a sad rent. But here stands one nigh thee, destined to close up the void of thy affections. Oh, I beseech thee, as thou clingest round him, and findest how fully his love and duty have filled the dreaded void, think, and think again, of him of whom he is to thee the mystic representative, and assure thyself how fully he can supply every void, and draw entire upon himself the affections which have been withdrawn from the fleeting objects of this world below.—There! I commit thee to him, who is henceforward charged by God and man with the love and care of thee. Again, farewell! Even thus must we all in our appointed time part to our several stations, whether God shall fix them immediately in this world, or in the next. Heaven's blessing be upon you both, now and for ever!

In a few moments after this parting address, bride and bridegroom, carriage and crowd, had vanished. The gates were closed, and all returned to more than its wonted stillness.

THE BRIDE.

Ah, Bride! in robes of snowy fold
Thou standest deck'd, thy partner's pride,
And on thy brow
Wreath'd flowrets glow.
So stood thy Prototype of old,
The Everlasting at her side,
In sunny robes of holiness
'Mid her attendant virgins soar'd,
While round her, prodigal to bless,
The Spirit all his fragrance pour'd,
And heaven and earth, by nations came
With offerings, and ador'd her name.

Ah, Bride! reluctant, weeping sore,
Thou quittest scenes of by-gone mirth;
Yea, give lament
Full scope and vent:
So wept thy Prototype of yore,
And bade farewell to joys of earth;
When the celestial bridegroom bare
Her steps away, and home, and sire,
And love, and ease, and worldly care,
And pomp, and pride, and vain desire,
All she forsook, content to cling
Around the everlasting King.

Ah, Bride! and thou must weep again,
In bitter travail, faint, and mourn;

Nor thou alone
Those pangs hast known:
So cried thy Prototype in pain,
When her blest progeny was born.
Sword, chains, and torture, fire and stake,
To her last need a bed supplied;
Stripe, wound, and bruise, and torturing ache,
Stood ministers her couch beside:
Down on the dust's vile pallet strown
She lay, and breath'd a feeble moan.

Ah, Bride! and smiles shall come at last:
A mother's joy past pangs replace;
And blest shall be
Thy well-earn'd glee:
So smil'd thy Prototype, and cast
Fond looks of gladness on her race.
O'er a vast multitude she smil'd,
That endless stretch'd till sight grew faint,
In each assembled face a child
She saw, and every child a saint:
Look'd from her golden throne, while grew
Her raptures on the long review.

Ah, Bride! in faith thus smile and weep,
Holy thy grief be, pure thy joy:
So shall heaven ope
His starry cope,
And angels bend, and number keep
Of every smile, and every sigh.

O, image of the eternal spouse,
  Type of all purest, holiest, best,
Up to the glorious picture rouse
  Each slumbering motion of thy breast,
And with thy beauteous spirit prove
The heavenly bridegroom's deathless love.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GARDEN.

There were still many relics of former days, and traces of the inhabitance of a numerous family, to be found in the Manor-house, and its appended garden, exclusive of the lofty walls of the latter, of its terrace terminated at each end by an alcove, whence you looked down upon an oblong fish-pond set in the greenest turf, of its filbert grove, and lofty walnut trees. I was walking in it one day with my friend, when my eye was caught by a long bed beneath one of the walls, parallel to which it ran, and divided in its other direction into several portions by partitions of uncemented stone, on which the moss had now filled up in a good measure the crevices, and supplied the place of mortar. They seemed to owe their preservation to the conve-

nient use to which the occupier applied them, in keeping certain crops asunder.

It would seem, said my friend, observing the object of my attention, as if a traditionary sense of Paradise and its delights had, with the mass of our instincts, accompanied the transmission of the flesh from sire to son. Man is naturally fond of a garden, and to a Christian it possesses a sacredness which throws a holiness over all its operations. In a garden the first man was born, there he tasted (and no where else) purely innocent joy; and in a garden, too, was undergone the agony of him that restored that bliss; there also was buried the restorer; and there, in his own glorious person, announced the resurrection of the dead. As in every other case, my father turned to account this primary direction of nature. He assigned us each our little plot to adorn and cultivate, and these partitions marked our several portions. I may call this spot the cradle of my moral character, to the formation of which it contributed almost as much as to my bodily vigour. It was at all times a resource against listlessness, and many a fit of lowness of spirits, and of impatient temper, too, have I vanquished here; for its occupations not only called off my brooding attention from myself,

but filled my mind with the most soothing and agreeable images. For these I have to thank my dear father, who inwove every object here with such glorious and joyous associations.

He did not encourage us in taking the care of animals as our amusement, while he promoted our love of fostering plants to the utmost of his power. I perceive the wisdom of his distinction. In the former case, the passions of the creature provoke in return the worst passions of its master, and its occasional resistance to his whim and caprice rouses into action the elementary feelings of tyranny. Besides, its condition in the creation comes too near our own to suggest much beyond the usual routine of thought in a child. But in plants there are no passions to combat, there is no victory to be gained, which, in proportion to its completeness, inflicts on the conqueror himself the deeper moral wound. They obey implicitly, and shew a kind of passive gratitude by faithfully exhibiting in their growth and appearance the smallest exertion of his hands. At the same time, the child soon finds that, however fond he may be of indulging a cruel caprice or curiosity, he must forego it here. They can yield him no homage of cries and groans by which to feed his feeling of power.

But the beauty, tenderness, and delicacy of forms by which they return his labours, win his heart, and call forth its best affections; meanwhile, every thing concerning them leads him on to the contemplation of an agent besides himself. Between the placing of the root in the ground, and the putting forth of the blossom, he perceives, that a hand must be working when his own is idle, and one without whose working his own would have been uselessly employed in the very first instance. Day after day, he comes to see more and more the subserviency of his operations to those of this hand, and that continual working of Providence, which from its familiarity escapes our view in looking on ourselves, presents itself here almost palpable at every turn, and God is walking in the garden as in Paradise of old. Such was the process, as far as I can now conceive, of my thoughts; in addition to this, I reaped an inferior, though important advantage. I was led to note times and seasons, and learn the value of an opportunity.

But our fondness for the garden, and familiarity with its objects and operations, laid a fund for moral and religious illustration, whence my father dealed out to us with no sparing hand; he followed, indeed, the example of a greater

teacher still, who hath bidden us look at the lilies of the field, who figured himself under the vine, and cursed the unbelieving Jerusalem in the barren fig-tree. Such illustrations come at once to the heart, they refer us to scenes of pure and guiltless delight, and we feel a lurking flattery, despite of a melancholy feeling of the frailty of tenure which such types exhibit, at the being compared to flowers, glad that we can in any degree resemble and call to mind these beautiful and innocent tribes of creation. From the laying of the seed in the ground till it re-appear in the pod an hundred, or perhaps ten thousand fold, and come again into our hands to re-commit to earth, what a series of analogies for moral illustration! Birth, infancy, youth, manhood, old age, and death, are thrust upon our reflection by a single plant, in one short summer. The dew, the rain, the duly attempered heat, remind us of our blessings; and the blight, the frost, the shears, warn us to prepare against equally sudden visitations. Every flower, too, from some peculiar characteristic, enforces its peculiar moral. The lowly, yet fragrant, violet, the tall, flaunting, but ill-odoured poppy, the ubiquity of the hardy daisy, the snowdrop timidly opening the year, the foxglove glowing

with rich purple, and glorying in the scorching heat of Midsummer, and the dismal-looking Michaelmas daisy, crying out to the rest of its tribe, like the poor prophet of Jerusalem, "Woe! woe! woe! for winter is coming," and struck down at last in its speech by his icy dart; all these convey their appropriate lessons, and my father stored himself well from their treasure-house. Thus, in one sense, every tree in the garden was a tree of knowledge; and the style of thought, produced by its moral associations, made it somewhat savour of the fragrance of innocence and wisdom which sanctified its blissful predecessor.

Trifles often shew forth peculiarity of character with more decided effect than more important occasions. Our gardens proved this maxim abundantly; for, not only was it easy to distinguish which belonged to a boy, and which to a girl, the latter cherishing the more delicate-hued and tender, the former the more flaunting and sturdy; but, among those of the same sex, a remarkable difference was discernible. One of my brothers, who was afterwards a merchant, was an utilitarian, and his border was filled with only such plants as were on the list of domestic economy. I was his next neighbour; and his

sombre troop of sage, lettuce, and thyme, made a singular contrast with my showy array. I have heard many a hearty laugh both from family and friends, at my central group of gaudy orange lilies, surrounded with knots of poppies, and my tall, stately, soldier-like holly-hocks, which took their stand there in their due season. My father would often amuse himself in viewing these characteristics, and would delight us by playfully entering into the merry rallies, which, with all good-nature, we freely bestowed upon each other. We little thought that he was in mind going far beyond amusement, and that our most careless moments were to decide our future destination. But he was right. I verily believe that my garden sent me off to India.

I perceive a straggling violet or two yet lingering at the foot of the wall where was once the plot of that sister whose death I have already mentioned to you, as the first occurring in our family. After we had outgrown our childish amusement, these plots were converted to different purposes; her's was turned to a bed of violets. It was in full bloom and fragrance on the day of her funeral, of which its odour has to me been redolent ever since. It stays not in the outward senses, but comes like a palpable

blow upon my heart, and inflicts even yet a sharp, though momentary pang. Let us pass on. A nightingale at that moment began his song from the hawthorn hedge, and gave most opportunely a different channel to our thoughts.

THE PIMPERNELL.*

See'st yon Pimpernell? an hour is past
And he was holding dalliance with the sun,
All bar'd his crimson pride: now clos'd, downcast,
His blossoms seek their favorite skies to shun.

Young Edwin came, the warning change beheld,
Then hurried to his hinds, and hark! I hear
His loaded waggons creaking from the field,
For storms, he says, and angry hours are near.

Oh! 'mid the flowers life's tortuous path that strew,
Is there not one like this? E'en as I speak,
Thy bosom-friend's estranged look review,
Remark his icy eye, his smileless cheek.
Adversity is nigh!—Speed, counsel how
To soften as thou mayest the inevitable blow.

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* This little flower is a well known weathergage, always shutting up its blossoms before rain.

II.

THE PREACHERS.

Amid my garden's broider'd paths I trod,
And there my mind soon caught her favorite clue;
I seem'd to stand amid the church of God,
And flowers were preachers, and (still stranger) drew
From their own life and course
The love they would enforce,
And sound their doctrine was, and every precept true.

And first the Sunflower spake. Behold, he said,
How I unweariedly from dawn to night
Turn to the wheeling sun my golden head,
And drink into my disk fresh draughts of light.
O, mortal! look and learn;
So, with obedient turn,
From womb to grave pursue the sun of life and might.

And next I heard the lowly Camomile,
Who, as I trod on him with reckless feet,
And wrang his perfume out, cried, List awhile—
E'en thus with charity the proud one greet.
And, as insulters press,
E'en turn thou thus and bless,
And yield from each heart's bruise a redolence more sweet.

Then from his rocky pulpit I heard cry
The Stonecrop. See how loose to earth I grow,
And draw my juicy nurture from the sky.
So drive not thou, fond man, thy root too low;

But loosely clinging here,
From God's supernal sphere
Draw life's unearthly food, catch heaven's undying glow.

Then preach'd the humble Strawberry. Behold
The lowliest and least adorn'd of flowers
Lies at thy feet; yet lift my leafy fold,
And fruit is there unfound in gaudier bowers.
So plain be thou, and meek,
And when vain man shall seek,
Unveil the blooming fruit of solitary hours.

Then cried the Lily: Hear my mission next.
On me thy Lord bade ponder and be wise;
O, wan with toil, with care and doubt perplext,
Survey my joyous bloom, my radiant dies.
My hues no vigils dim,
All care I cast on him,
Who more than faith can ask each hour to faith supplies.

The Thistle warn'd me last; for, as I tore
The intruder up, it cried, Rash man, take heed!
In me thou hast thy type. Yea, pause and pore—
Even as thou doth God his vineyard weed:
Deem not each worthier plant
For thee shall waste and want,
Nor fright with hostile spines thy Master's chosen seed.

Then cried the garden's host with one consent:
Come, Man, and see how, day by day, we shoot,
For every hour of rain, and sunshine lent,
Deepen our glowing hues, and drive our root;

And, as our heads we lift,
Record each added gift,
And bear to God's high will, and man's support, our fruit.

O, Leader thou of earth's exulting quire,
Thou with a first-born's royal rights endued,
Wilt thou alone be dumb? alone desire
Renew'd the gifts so oft in vain renew'd?
Then sicken, fret, and pine,
As on thy head they shine,
And wither 'mid the bliss of boundless plenitude?

Oh, come! and, as thy due, our concert lead.
Glory to him, the Lord of life and light,
Who nurs'd our tender leaf, our colours spread,
And gave thy body mind, the first-born's right,
By which thy flight may cleave
The starry pole, and leave
Thy younger mates below in death's unbroken night.

III.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

Sweet bird! with gush and liquid shake,
Startling my ear unpractis'd long,
Or chattering from thy hidden brake,
Tempering with artful foil thy song;
And waking then
Hill, wood, and glen,
With one long melancholy note,
Pouring a flood of sweetness from thy throat.

Oft have I tax'd thee with caprice,
And wayward mood, the songster's shame,
Charging on thee mine own dull vice.
Oh, could I half thy wisdom claim!
For now, at last,
Thy numbers cast
Their sense into this soul of mine,
And every note hath meaning and design.

Thou singest of another clime,
Strange to our thought, and sight, and ear;
And thither, with revolving time,
Again thy vigorous wing shall steer.
E'en to thy nest
Thou art but a guest,
And foreigners are thy little brood;
Their home is far o'er yonder ocean's flood.

Sweet bird! e'en such a guest as thou
Hath nestled in this happy heart;
He came, I know not whence nor how,
Whither I know not shall depart:
But he shall rear
A progeny here
Of holy thoughts, to wing their flight
Homeward with him to everlasting light.

Yea! God's own Spirit here hath made
His habitation, and each hour
His monitory notes pervade
Its inmost nook with piercing power,

A varied strain
Of joy and pain,
As o'er this world of flesh he wails,
Or worlds of bliss in distant prospect hails.

He wails o'er days and years mis-spent,
O'er good rejected, welcom'd ill,
O'er bliss, which never thanks upsent,
O'er chastenings, and rebellion still;
O'er fruitless tear,
Vows insincere,
And stubborn will, and mind perverse,
That duly turn'd each blessing to a curse.

And then he sings of realms of joy,
Whence he hath come, and where shall go,
Of fulness never doom'd to cloy,
Thoughts uncontemplated below;
The Godhead's blaze,
Where angels gaze,
And thrones are set for spirits blest,
Amid the mansions of undying rest.

Sweet bird! unwearied passenger!
E'en thus, with each revolving spring,
Thou biddest me new thoughts confer,
Bearest fresh wisdom on thy wing;
And ay I yearn
At thy return
For realms beyond this darkling mine.
Oh! be my passage fleet and smooth as thine.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ABSENTEE.

Agreeably to his promise, my friend called upon me a few days after our last walk, to conduct me on another. He led me two or three miles up the valley, until we came to where a round green knoll rose in the centre of the flattest part, and compelled the river to make an elbow. It very effectually sheltered a farm-house from the assault of the north-east wind. Its summit had been raised artificially, and, like every eminence in the neighbourhood, was deeply indented with a trench and mound. In the centre of this fortified circle rose an oak-tree, which, thus situated, seemed to employ, as a defence against the cattle, the rampart which the ancient native had used for protection from the stranger. My friend took me up to it,

and pointed out with more than common interest its healthy youth, proved by the smooth polish of its rind, and vigorous freshness of verdure. This tree, he said, I value more than all upon the estate, (for it was on a farm of his;) it was planted by a younger and favorite brother the day before he left home, never, alas! to return. He was full, no doubt, of the foreboding natural on such occasions, and willing to leave this monument behind him, not without a hope, however, anticipating the joyful hour when he should behold it again, and its stature be in apt correspondence with his ripened prospects. His destination was India, where he joined me. What an overflow of happiness he brought with him, for he seemed not only to bring himself, (and who that has not felt can estimate the joy and delight of seeing once again a favourite brother?) but home also with him. His thoughts, his language, his countenance, were all redolent of it, and I could not satisfy myself with gazing upon one who had been so lately the object of the gaze of the assembled family, and seemed almost to bear their looks lingering upon him still. I could again open my heart; and, in a few days, I satisfied the solitude of years. He would often, in our

conversation upon home, in which we fondly called up to mind the most trifling circumstance, (and the more trifling it was, the closer we hugged it to heart, for we then felt what a strong hold we had upon the memory of its dear inmates,) he would often recur to this tree, and fondly wonder how it was faring. Immediately after my return, I sought it out, and, from remembering his description, found it without difficulty. Oh! how my heart bled when I beheld its straight and vigorous stem, which seemed to mock the mortality of its planter, who had long been mouldering in the grave.

His death again consigned me to solitude, and to that species of solitude which is of all most intolerable. For what is most commonly understood by solitude, the converse of the hermit with the face of nature, unintruded upon by men, scarcely deserves the title. He surrounds himself with visionary beings, from whose society there is no external interruption to break him off. Nor do I mean, though it much more nearly approaches what I felt, the solitude amid crowds, when we meet at every moment the natural objects of our sympathy, and yet are debarred from the enjoyment of them; when

we are conscious of every passenger having affections to bestow, but not upon us, and we feel, in consequence, repudiated by the whole human race, who, while by their presence they banish that visionary world to which we would fain fly for refuge, yet impart to us none of the comforts of the real. The solitude of which I speak is still more bitter than this; it is the utter deprivation of religious sympathy which I experienced in a heathen land. Accustomed as I had been to identify sacred rites with the religion of Christ, to see in every thing bearing the human form a brother in Christ, I now found around me a religion in direct rebellion to the dearest and most sacred feelings of my bosom; I beheld crowds gathering to worship, but could not, dared not, accompany them even with my thoughts into their temple, much less join in communion; and ardently longing to associate with my fellow-creatures in the praises of our common maker, and warm my heart with their pious sympathy, I was compelled to turn away from the face of man, and from all that I was wont to cling to as incentives to holy feelings, with abhorrence and disgust, to fly to God in the deepest recesses of my solitary bosom; for there alone, notwithstanding the million of beings

by which I was surrounded, I was enabled to find him. There, indeed, amid that desert, he was my guiding cloud by day, my pillar of fire by night.

Nevertheless, the social feelings implanted in our nature, and encouraged and built upon by our religion, require to be satisfied. I could not always bear to think of myself as an isolated, and, as it were, excommunicated being, and that sympathy which was denied in the flesh I sought and obtained in the spirit. Now it was that I felt the blessed fruits of my father's care in instilling those principles which I have already detailed to you as regulating our external communion. I leaped at once from my solitude into the midst of a holy and glorious society, both of earth and heaven; I considered that I was a member of the church of Christ, a partaker in the communion of saints. Unspeakable (however imaginary some may think it) was my comfort. I could call up familiar faces of members of that body, but above all, I knew the train of thought which pervaded it, and which brought me into actual spiritual society with it. For, assuredly, if coincidence of time and place be sufficient for bodily presence, coincidence of thought must be for spiritual. Had I been less

deeply imbued with this spirit, had my communion been but with nominal members, and my conversation with them of that transitory and capricious cast, which cannot promise a moment's sympathy between the absent; had I never gone beyond the abstract idea of this glorious society, nor given substance and individuality to as much as came within my sphere, it would then have been to me indeed an imaginary body, an empty sound, a barren comfort. Disappointed and disgusted, I should have taken refuge, perhaps in indifference, and finally settled in practical infidelity.

But with this feeling I never felt isolated, notwithstanding my solitude at a distant station which was many hundred miles from any Christian society. I was one of a substantial body, with which, whether visible or not, I was ever in real communion. Thus, I soon mastered all distressing feelings, and subdued that intolerable yearning which the sight of a strange religion occasions to one denied the enjoyment of his own, putting him in mind of something so much better, and more in harmony with his bosom. And the solemn call of the Imaum at morn and eve, summoning the Moslem to worship, and the sights and sounds of the rites of Hindoo

sacrifice, if, perhaps, they raised a moment's melancholy by proclaiming, as it were, to me my utter solitude, yet they immediately after served to put me in mind of the wondrous blessing, and opportunities which God had conferred upon me, having reared me like Samuel in his temple, and protecting me like Daniel amid the heathen. And though I felt all the longing of the Israelite, who, surrounded by heathen abominations, cried out, "Oh! how amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of Hosts: my soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God." (Oh! I repeated that beautiful hymn with streaming eyes, when for the first time after many a long year they saluted a Christian church.) Yet I was cheerfully resigned to the lot which God had assigned me, and my solitude, concentrating so much of my thoughts upon myself, made the consciousness of his continual support more than ever palpable and lively.

Nor did I lose the benefits even of our internal domestic communion. Each day at morn and eve, at the hours which I knew were customary for prayer, I retired to join my spirit to theirs. I put up their names, one by one, (how I delighted in pronouncing them) in a prayer corres-

ponding to that which I knew was at the very same moment being offered up for me. Great, very great, is the comfort of praying for those whom we reverence and love, still greater if we can be assured that they also are then praying for us. We feel all the joy and gladness of a mutual meeting before the throne of God; there is imparted to the heart, however desolate before, an inexpressible sociality, may I say a holy conviviality; and we then, more than at any other time, are conscious of the indissoluble union which we have obtained by being one in the Lord.

Meanwhile, that dear circle of home was diminishing apace. Several times it was my sad lot to find by letters at noon that one for whom among the rest I had offered my morning supplication had been for some months beyond all need of human intercession; and with a resigned heart, though with streaming eyes, I omitted the name in the evening. At last, before I quitted the country, but one sister remained upon my list, and she lived not to hail my return. I confess that I clung tenaciously to this last name; it seemed my last hold upon earth, the only bar left between me and the spiritual world, which, however the soul may love to contem-

plate, our bodily nature regards with a shrinking awe. My consolation each time was that they could not be more absent in the flesh than before, and were probably much nearer in the spirit; and now, at this moment, when I am the only one left, I cannot feel that I have lost any thing more than their bodily presence, and patiently await my dissolution as the means of perfecting that union of spirit which it has been the object of our lives to maintain. Lord Jesus, in thee I have been joined unto them, and in thee shall be joined.

A violent storm, which had been gradually obscuring the upper part of the valley, now reached us. His brother's tree sheltered us with its full foliage from its fury. When it was over, the old man looked up among the boughs with a smile of deep delight, which he then significantly directed to me. We then quitted the hill. I have paid it many a visit since.

THE VISIT.

With bleeding heart, thro' glen, o'er steep,
I reach at last the sacred spot
Where I must sit awhile, and weep
O'er him who was, and now is not.

Alas! to this sequestered shade
His guiding step my step obeyed,
And on this mossy chair
We sate, and talk'd of days to come,
Nor thought of woe, nor dream'd of gloom,
Fond worldlings as we were.

Along yon rugged mountain mass,
This valley's domineering Lord
Oft would his pointed finger pass
O'er peaks and glens to be explor'd.
And unexplor'd they still remain,
And gleam and lure my steps in vain—
I cannot, dare not go.
Beheld in sunny distance here,
Each destin'd spot invokes a tear,
And breaks my heart in two.

Upon this mossy trunk I shed
(The chair on which he sate that day)
The fruitless offerings of the dead,
The gayest flowers that cross'd my way.
Sad ministry! yet fondly dear
To him whose hands the fatal bier
Bore not, nor eye survey'd.
Ah! flowers of other suns, and strown
By other hands, bedeck'd the stone
Where that dear form is laid.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FIRST-BORN.

On one of those mornings in the latter end of Spring, which compel us by their loveliness to give up all occupation within doors, I accompanied my friend on one of his rambles: the day promised much from its light and shade, and he seemed to be in a mood to extract the utmost both of contemplation and delight which surrounding objects could supply. Having crossed our valley, we toilsomely wound up a lofty but sharp and narrow ridge, by which we are separated from another valley running parallel to our own, but exhibiting in its straightened breadth a wilder character. From being exposed to the sun, and sheltered from the wind, we found the ascent very hot and close; but as soon as ever our heads began to peep above the

brow of the hill, a fresh breeze delightfully fanned our faces, and brought with it upon our ear soft swells of music and the merry pealing of bells. On looking down below upon a favorite view, we saw a flag flying upon the top of the village tower. Every thing denoted some unusual occasion of joyful festivity. We had not been speculating upon it long, before a peasant, in his way from the village, informed us that they were celebrating the birth of a son and heir newly born to the great proprietor of the valley.

It is very well, it is even very right, said my friend, after indulging a few moments in musing, that the first-born should be ushered into the world with more than ordinary welcome. I only wish that they would put their respect and joy upon a more suitable footing than is commonly done: that they would look to the dignity of character with which the moral constitution of society invests the son and heir, rather than to his large expectations. Society hails him as the person set apart by Providence to succeed in upholding and transmitting her institutions, as a future centre of union to a portion of her members, and point of support to her necessary relations. She sees in him one pledge more of her continuance, if not of her improvement;

and in the little world of home he is joyfully saluted as the future main trunk in which all the branches shall maintain their connexion, and the family still retain a root in earth. But how much more excellent is this dignity in a religious point of view. If we turn to the earliest state of God's church upon earth, there, in the first-born of the Patriarch, we behold the future High Priest, ordained to mediate with daily sacrifice between God and the household; we see the destined conservator of his oracles, the chosen channel of his blessings to convey them to nations unborn, the future king, to rule and dispense justice among his brethren; and though the only begotten Son of God, and first-born from the dead, be the sole Mediator and High Priest now, and the offices of his church have been committed to a peculiar class of men, still the son and heir is not entirely divested of spiritual privilege and responsibility. God still retains some of his peculiar claim upon the first-born. As long as society is bound together in bonds of Christianity, there, as future head of the family, as its future representative in the general assemblage of families, he is bound in an especial manner to qualify himself for dis-

charging that high situation faithfully and diligently, for his sake who was first-born among many brethren.

These, I own, are not the notions commonly entertained. Would that they were! Without these privileges, what, indeed, is the first-born? First, it may be said, to enjoy his mother's caresses; first to receive his father's instruction; first to taste all the blissful feelings which existence bestows; to have offered to him, as to one endowed with a sacredness of office, the first fruits of all earthly enjoyments; but, alas! is he not also first to taste the cup of sorrow? is it not his to shed the first tear, to heave the first sigh, and, in the natural course of things, first to quit the banquet of worldly happiness, to which he had been so fondly welcomed?

As he uttered these last words, the wind, blowing in a sudden fit of freshness, brought with it a full gush of the music, and of the merry peal of bells from below, and many a solitary glen reverberated the roar of cannon. The old man smiled. It would seem, he proceeded, as if the world had overheard me, and sent forth all its tongues in contradiction and defiance. But I am not singular: thus thought

my father, and I have but put together, after the long waste of years, the scattered fragments of his instructions.

Take heed to your ways, my child, (he would often say to our eldest brother,) keep a continual guard upon your goings, for in this our household you occupy, as one endued with royal privileges, a station which admits of no privacy. Every step which you take is watched, every word which you speak is caught up, every thing which you are seen to do is immediately imitated by your younger brethren, who look to you as their model, and are eager, by means of the resemblance, to anticipate the claims and bearing of more advanced and privileged years. Oh, then, my boy, not for your own sake only, but for theirs too, not only in prudence, but also in charity, be vigilant, and keep a jealous eye to all your proceedings. Be not to this little world of ours, comparatively innocent now, Oh, be not to it another first man, as it were, to bring sin into it. It had been better for you not to have been born than to offend one of these little ones. You stand upon an eminence, and, both from above and from below, are an object of earnest contemplation: from below, to each of these younger ones; from above, to their angels in

heaven. Go on, therefore, in all circumspection and diligence, remembering that you are captain of a band of young soldiers; and in you, to step back is to impede all behind, to turn aside is to lead them astray; it lies in you to conduct to victory or defeat, to freedom under Christ, or captivity under Satan. The voice of flattery will tell you, (I doubt not, has already told you,) the world will officiously shout into your ear that you are a son and heir. Shew yourself a son and heir indeed, a son in dutiful obedience to me, an heir in studious preparation to succeed to the government of a household where God is worshipped in sincerity of faith, and to maintain among its members the unity of spirit in the bond of peace.

Oh, my first-born in the flesh, be first-born in the spirit also, even as you were the first led up to the laver of baptism, the first to hear and understand the good tidings of the salvation of Christ. Undervalue not, therefore, the calling with which you have been called; forego not, I beseech you, these precious privileges, part not with them for all which this world can give; for, so doing, you will commit the crime of Esau, who, for a paltry momentary gratification, bartered the glorious office of High Priest of God,

and transmitter of his blessings; yea, and greater than that of Esau will be your condemnation, in proportion as the perfection of the gospel is more excellent than the rudiments of the law. He gave up the blessedness of a Redeemer, who should spring from his loins. But you, in your falling off, will give up your share in a Redeemer who hath already come, and blessed you with all spiritual blessedness. Maintain, then, your station, nor let a younger brother take out of your hands the enviable privilege of being held up as a pattern to the rest in all godliness.

Son and heir! look not to a worldly inheritance, but considering yourself as a mere sojourner, like Isaac, in a country not your own, patiently await the fulfilment of the promises of the Lord. Be thou a son of God, and an heir of everlasting life.

He here ceased. We had unconsciously been descending, and having thus again interposed the hill between us and the valley, had left the music and the bells to sound to their own little secluded world, even there soon to be mute, and, when again awakened, to celebrate, like true hirelings, the praises of another. A fit omen this of the treatment which the world prepares for a son and heir.

THE EARLY TREE.

Ten springs have harness'd now
The swinkt steer to the plow,
And bid the southwind to his task repair,
Since I admiring stood,
O first-born of the wood!
Thy plumy foliage 'mid thy brethren bare,
And treasur'd thoughts upon the sight,
Which each returning spring unlocks with new delight.

Bleak thro' their naked rows
Heaven's wind complaining blows,
Passing like unmet kindness fast away:
Whilst thou, like saintly breast,
With spirit's visit blest,
Drawest it into every bowery bay,
And from each leafy cavity
Breathest with organ's note an anthem to the sky.

Vain falls heaven's dew on them,
Adown each leafless stem,
Trickling in idle runnels to the ground:
Whilst, O good steward! thou
Dost from thy full leaf throw
The glittering gems in joyous showers around,
And, ever as they catch heaven's beams,
A saintly halo round thy wreathed temples streams.

Up their insensate rind
Vainly the sap would find,

Dull stubborn hearts! a channel for its flood:
Whilst every leaf of thee
Drinketh the liquid glee,
And thou dost soar in shade's green plenitude,
Singing, O Prophet! to the rest
Their glory yet to come, its pledge in thee confest.

It is not yet the time,
The mist, the frost, the rime
Still smite, and suns a fickle radiance pour.
Thus cry yon worldlings all,
And shrink from heaven's bright call,
While thou dost answer from thy inmost core;
Thro' trunk, and bough, and bud dost wake,
And proudly at his throne thy thousand banners shake.

What recks thee now the hail,
What now the wintery gale,
Hurling thy hair in whirlwinds to the dust?
What now the hoary frost
On thy shrunk rind embost,
Or marring autumn with his lichen'd crust?
Past is thy world of care and pain,
Thy better world is come, thou smilest once again.

Blest Martyr! from thy woes
God's garden brighter glows,
And others laugh where thou of old didst weep:
From out the leafy bed,
By thy strown honours spread,
The snow-drop peers, and timid harebells peep
With glossy spikes of emerald die,
And gain amid thy loss their knowledge of the sky.

In gummy cerements bound
Thy brethren sleep profound,
Whilst thou call'd first, O Saint, to life and light,
Hast put thy beryl'd crown,
And robes of glory on,
And newborn heavens around thee glowing bright
A beatific vision ope,
And thou hast smiles for tears, reality for hope.

How dear thy tufted screen,
Whence thy unsullied green
Rains down its balm on my unwonted eyes!
How sweet the wild-bee's song,
How gay the insect throng
Upon thy nectar'd pores that ceaseless plies!
A new-born world is in thy shade,
And thou to new-born worlds hast now my thoughts
convey'd.

Within thy shadow's ring
Each timid child of spring
Finds nurture: there the primrose loves to veil
His pale head from noon's glare.
Lapt in noon's freshness, there
The well is dimpled with the plunging pail.
From branch, and leaf, and shade, O Tree,
Thou dost put emblems forth, preach faith, hope, charity.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TALE OF THE FAMILY.

During the warms days of August, I used to find my friend sitting in a small interior chamber, to which I entered through the larger room which he commonly occupied. It was peculiarly pleasant at such a season. Through its large mullioned window he looked out upon a perfectly green turf, and the eye ranged up a shady perspective formed by the fine walnut trees, which I have before mentioned. Into this shade occasionally a sudden breeze, bringing delicious coolness with it, would, by fanning aside the foliage, introduce a bright, but momentary gleam, throwing out in glowing relief the gigantic twisted boughs. Within the room, the idea of coolness was immediately suggested by a dark wainscot of Norway oak. The sombreness of

this ground was relieved by miniatures of the family. On these I have often pored with intense interest. They represented the characters of a history which, recording acts of mind rather than of body, caused me to look out for something important, to find a clue to some trait of thought or feeling in every feature. There I often indulged my fancy in thinking that I could trace signs of the last struggle of some passion, bravely combated, and triumphantly quelled; detect the faint marks of some affection, through the stamp of the more holy one which had been superinduced; catch the glow of internal peace, breaking, as through a veil, through features of sorrow; and perceive the merry eye, and the lines of smiles around the mouth, chastened by the control of a deep internal feeling, the sense no doubt of his presence, who, if he render joy less outwardly conspicuous, makes it also more inwardly substantial. Thus every feature from brow to lip was made to tell a tale, and my attention was never weary.

I remember being received here one morning by my friend, in all the ardour of a discovery, which he had just made. Chance had directed his attention in this room to an old forgotten closet, which, by that especial privilege accorded

to rambling ancient houses, had completely escaped the notice of all inmates since the day on which the last of the family quitted. Its door was so assimilated with the wainscoting as not to be distinguishable on a common inspection. It was here that my friend (as he told me in his usual quaint manner) was so fortunate as to discover the spirits of the miniatures without, the mental portraits of his family, in a number of papers, tied up in bundles and dated, which had their origin as follows. In the long winter evenings, when a blazing fire and assembled cheerful countenances, and in some perhaps that pleasing langour which then succeeds to the strong exercise of the morning, indispose each of the circle to the attention demanded by study or any graver reading, it was customary for some one, who succeeded, in turn, each evening, to recite a light tale, or an interesting anecdote of history, either of man or of nature. For this purpose, the elder members of the family frequently prepared themselves with a piece of original composition. Of such pieces these bundles consisted, and seemed to have been formed by some one who looked with a yearning heart upon the memorials of past days. The titles and dates, with the names of the composers, my

friend ascertained to be in the hand-writing of his latest surviving sister, who lived the last few years quite solitary in this once crowded mansion. On looking them over, I found them all of an instructive cast, particularly interesting as illustrating the characters of the several authors, which, like the miniatures without, however differing, shewed that they belonged to the same family. My friend was transported for some days into the times of his youth, and society long since vanished from the face of the earth. Of such as I chose he freely allowed me to take copies, and with one of them I here present the reader. Its author was a friend of the family, whom I may hereafter mention more particularly; and it has been selected chiefly because it was the shortest, a quality which it owed, no doubt, to its being written in verse, which has a wonderful effect in compelling a writer to cut off those superfluities into which sentences, not thus rigidly bound, will run, and gather up his ideas in the smallest space which they can bear. I thought also that its introduction would give a variety to my narrative, at the same time that the subject was not too dissimilar from that which I have in hand. The prologue, describing the author of the tale, was prefixed by my friend.

PROLOGUE TO THE WIDOW.

Leagu'd by the bonds of learning and of truth,
He and the Rector had been friends in youth,
And every rolling year but added force
To friendship, tho' it clipp'd their intercourse.
Of lowly birth, he fail'd not to derive
From education all that it can give.
All own'd his learning, and what breeds in most
Childish presumption, drew from him no boast.
Its very vastness serv'd him but to shew
How little man can hope to learn below.
Fools, by the steps surpass'd, their progress count
In lore, the wise by what remain to mount:
Each guided by their just affinities,
Those from the earth, these reckoning from the skies.
But he had more to quell all human pride;
In all, he made the book of life his guide.
Rustic was his appearance, and he woke
Perhaps your slight derision, till he spoke.
Then with increasing interest he seiz'd
Your eye and ear, and all he utter'd pleas'd.
He had that grace, so felt, not understood,
That true nobility, but not of blood,
That gift of winning hearts, so largely given
To minds that have been born again of heaven.
A kindness inexpressible shone forth
In all he said or did, and shew'd his worth.
Kind was he to the rich; he knew how rude
The world assails each struggle to be good.

Kind was he to the poor; he knew what woes
Beset their station,—from their ranks he rose.
Kind to the ignorant; he knew how small
Is man's profoundest knowledge after all.
But though so meek, so humble, and so mild,
In all disclosed of heart so quite a child;
'Mid his simplicity you could descry
The beaming of a native dignity,
That plainly told wherever lay the choice,
'Twixt God and man he knew no compromise.
And tho', perhaps, none more allowance made
For idle words in reckless moments said,
Yet did they never miss his just rebuke,
And turn a playful to a serious look.
Up a long-winding dale, 'mid moorlands drear,
With rudest neighbours he past all the year,
Save when this visit 'twas his turn to pay,
To sun himself i' th' south, as he would say.
It was a wond'rous change, to meet once more
With kindred minds, with manners, and with lore,
To find in conversation and in looks
What there he was obliged to seek in books;
And he enjoy'd the change, and none could be
More full of wit and playfulness than he;
And, when the allotted time expir'd, content
And strung anew, return'd to banishment,
From sun and smiling plains to mists and moors,
From educated life to senseless boors.
But God had sent him thither, and his choice,
Where'er it fell, to him was Paradise.
To this old man the promis'd tale had made
Its circling progress now, and thus he said:

THE WIDOW.

Amid the northern dales—with fond regret
I turn me back—my pastoral staff I set,
A novice in the ministry, and then
More read in books than conversant with men.
Now often with surprise I call to thought
Perplexities my blissful ignorance brought.
How I was summon'd to the sick man's side,
And inexperience sympathy denied:
To waken guilt, whom guilt had never stung;
To comfort woe, whom woe had never wrung;
Feel with despair, when hope serenest shone,
And wait on want, who want had never known.
But time and fortune long have mended this,
And now I feel with woe more nearly than with bliss.
Rude was my flock—but soon between us grew
Close bonds of love, which time still closer drew,
And every house, in various ways imprest,
Trusted its little history to my breast.
Thence to my charge I drew more useful lore
Than I had drawn from all my books before.
From this my stock a simple tale I cull:
Forgive, my hearers, if you find it dull.
Amid my congregation I had seen
A Widow (such she seem'd) of decent mien,
For widow's weeds she wore, and on her brow
Was stamp'd the ne'er-mistaken mark of woe.
She sate beneath a tablet that was styl'd
In memory of a husband and a child.
I never miss'd her; were it foul or fair,
Or rain, or snow, or flood, she still was there;

There with her hand across her aged eyes,
(The world shut out, her heart had room to rise.)
I never caught a glance ; 'twas still the same,
Still wrapt and downcast till the sermon came.
Then with unfailing earnestness her look
Was given up to me, nor once forsook.
I thank'd my God, such hearers bid us feel
Our awful charge, and edge our blunted zeal.
'Twas my delight, the morning service o'er,
To see the massy crowds that left the door
Break into little troops, that duly sped
Each to its vale, some patriarch at it's head.
Far o'er the hills I watch'd each parting train,
Till in their valley's lap they sank again.
And oft, in summer-tide, an hour was past,
In this review before I lost the last.
But in no troop the aged widow went,
Duly she vanish'd where, confusedly rent,
Two towery cliffs disclos'd a narrow vent.
And at that point as duly she was spied,
E'en to a minute, in the morning-tide,
So regular, so accurately true,
" The Widow in the gorge" a signal grew.
Boys ceas'd their play, and hurried to their books,
Girls donn'd their bonnets, and their Sunday looks.
Each dale and dingle I had now explor'd,
That to my church it's weekly tribute pour'd,
But this unvisited remain'd ; away
From every ordinary track it lay,
Trod but by urchins who had roam'd astray.
One morn, a lovely morn in June, I took
My lonely way, to explore the Widow's nook.

Beyond the gorge a grassy comb I found,
Scoop'd amid dark-blue mountains circling round.
A tarn, spread like a mirror at their feet,
Stretch'd circular, and, black with depth, it's sheet,
Fed by a roaring cataract, that sent
A dewy haze across the vale's extent.
Amid enclosures, whose trim form imprest
A greater wildness upon all the rest,
Rear'd on its banks the Widow's house arose,
With massive slatiug, proof to winter's snows.
With smiles she greeted me, with smiles which threw,
As our talk deepen'd and acquaintance grew,
A fainter radiance, fading one by one,
Like gleams before the tempest coming on :
Till, long before she clos'd, the last had fled,
And a deep melancholy gloom'd instead.
I bore it patiently, methought, she cried,
My first affliction, when my husband died ;
Of half my sublunary store bereft—
This would but render dearer what was left.
And after many a night of sorrow sore,
And many a page of holy writ turned o'er,
Prevail'd upon myself to term the woe
A mercy—but I could not feel it so—
Ordained to make me know the real worth
Of all the transitory bliss of earth ;
To yield without complaint our Maker's due,
And bless the Giver and the Taker too.
But when that too, my last, my only joy,
That bliss unspeakable, my poor dear boy,
That solace of each week, and day, and hour,
That robb'd this world of care of half its power,

When that too went—forgive me, mighty God—
I could not bow, I could not kiss the rod.
I term'd the visitation (weak and rash)
No sire's correction, but the tyrant's lash,
And, reckless of what further storm may burst,
Call'd, day and night, on him to do his worst:
All that before upheld me flang away,
And op'd the sacred volume—not to pray—
But smile in bitter scorn upon the leaf,
And mock the page that promis'd bliss to grief.
And e'en when months their tedious course had run,
And woe diminish'd with each added sun,
Rebellion was unquell'd, maintain'd it's part,
In a perverted head and callous heart.
'Twas then that good old man, so meek, so mild,
(He lies between my husband and my child,)
Your predecessor, sought me out. Severe
The struggle was that he encounter'd here.
But he prevail'd at length; can I forget
That blessed day—Oh no! I feel it yet—
When life and heat, launch'd forth in every strain,
Thrill'd thro' my wither'd heart, and bade it throb again?
When light pour'd in thro' my glaz'd eye at last,
And I beheld, as in a dream, the past?
I found that I had center'd every joy,
Each hope that heaven demanded, in my boy:
An idol had been worshipping, which took
From the great owner every thought and look.
Now nothing interpos'd, and straight to heaven,
Each look ascended, and each thought was given.
Hence patiently—but not without a tear—
I look behind, and all before is clear.

And lonely tho' my neighbours deem my life,
Who once appear'd a mother and a wife ;
And you, perhaps, these rocks and wilds unknown
May awe, yet never was I less alone.
No—not when beaming in his boyhood's pride,
My darling son was ever at my side ;
'Mid this unpeopled dell, these paths untrod,
I see, I hear, I almost touch my God.
And tho' on wintry nights my friends below
A thought upon the Widow's dell bestow,
Pity my lonely and uncircled hearth,
It has its joys and bliss, tho' not of earth.
The very sounds that fright and wake their sigh,
Rains, winds, scath'd fragments tumbling from on high,
Assure me that my guardian still is nigh.
The only foe I have is Memory now,
And every day he deals a fainter blow,
And stirs me but to turn my face away,
And gaze before me upon growing day.
" My boy ?" you ask—" nay, no excuses make,
Most kind I feel the interest you take ;
And tho' a pain, 'twill be an useful pain,
To marshal up my sorrows in one train,
And view at once the woes, which, one by one,
Spite of myself, still wake a tear or groan.
Up from his childhood, my dear boy had shewn
A genius far above the common tone ;
And friends and able judges bade me hope
The best and brightest, would I give it scope.
So, at the appointed time, he went away
To college. Oh ! can I forget the day

When the last treasure of my heart I gave
Trembling, misgiving, to the world's wild wave.
I clomb yon cone-like eminence—thence pale
And heartsick, watch'd his journey down the dale;
Methought it was his slow-pac'd funeral mov'd,
And bore away for ever all I lov'd:
And when he pass'd behind yon jutting steep,
Which seems a centinel the vale to keep,
Return'd, alone and desolate, to weep.
But letters, full of hope, and fraught with joy,
That sooth'd all care, soon reach'd me from my boy;
And each succeeding was more joyous still,
And spake of views—which God forbade to fill.
And others came from hands which held the sway
In those fam'd seats of learning at that day;
They spake of friends acquir'd, and prizes won,
And doughty scholars vanquish'd by my son.
Oh! need I say my heart was cheer'd, and more,
That pride stepp'd in where all was woe before:
A mother's pride. And who that has not prov'd
Can figure how a mother's breast is mov'd?
I know 'tis what stern moralists upbraid:
'Tis sin—for me the penalty is paid.
And now the time, the joyful time came on,
Destin'd to bring me back again my son.
He came!—the jutting steep I saw him turn,
And hurried down the rock—but not to mourn:
He came—again I clasp'd him in my arms,
Forgot all cares, and buried all alarms.
Some days had pass'd, nor longer I delay'd
To mark the change which time, tho' short, had made.

The childish plumpness of his face was fled,
Reflection's lines presented in its stead ;
The boyish laughing eye I only caught
At intervals, when he could rest from thought.
But at all other times 'twas calm and grave,
Or, rous'd, the lightning glance of eagles gave.
Still was his temper sweet, tho' thought had now
Chas'd, long indulg'd, the expression from his brow ;
And that peculiar shape, which stamps mind's seat,
Was there mature, in every line complete.
I felt an awe I could not understand,
Readier to render homage than demand.
But oh ! the fearful omens that I drew
When I beheld his cheek's decaying hue ;
All that spoke health so eloquently, fled,
Or center'd in two rings of ominous red.
So rifled, so despoil'd the world had sent,
Ah, faithless guard ! the treasure I had lent.
Thus care once more intrusive made her nest,
With all her horrid brood within my breast ;
Nor was he now my comrade as before :
At meals and night I saw him, and no more ;
For all day long upon his books intent
He sate, within his little study pent :
Still the same roof rose over us, and this,
Tho' less than hope, I learn'd to reckon bliss.
So patiently I waited till the eve,
My scanty dole of pleasure to receive.
At eve alone he laid his books aside,
And then upon some favorite ramble hied,
(For here he was unchang'd, and rambles still
Were his delight o'er stream, and dale, and hill ;)

And oft, on his return, would praise some spot
That day discover'd in a glen remote.
'Twas then, at close of day, his books laid by,
And lit with exercise his cheek and eye,
His spirits rais'd, all in its former train,
I felt that I had found my son again.
But only then—how oft with earnest prayer
I counsell'd him his precious health to spare ;
And ever this unwearied answer came,
" The toil is short, the end is wealth and fame."
Thy wealth and fame, vile world ! say, what are they,
Compar'd with what their winning takes away ?
Ah ! who can tell what anxious mothers feel ?
I watch'd his morning looks, I watch'd each meal,
And oft at dead of night from bed I crept,
Went to his door, and listen'd if he slept.
And oh ! one night what agony was mine ;
I heard him cough, and knew the fatal sign :
The deep and melancholy murmur fell
Upon my bosom, like his passing-bell.
O night ! the last of hope, the first of fear,
And, even now, beyond all dreary, drear !
Day after day I urg'd him, when, at last,
He found himself that life was ebbing fast.
Surpris'd, as waken'd from a dream, he felt
His limbs betray him, and their vigour melt ;
Languid and listless o'er his books he bent,
Weary and fainting on his walk he went :
At last, he said, confessing he was ill,
" Do with me, dearest mother, as you will."
From that same hour, invested with full share
Of power to rule, I took him to my care ;

His little study, source of all my pains
And fears, I lock'd, and lock'd it still remains.
Nor did he once enquire about his books,
But gave me all his thoughts, and all his looks:
I felt that I had gain'd my son once more,
My comforter, my comrade, as before.
O God! the short-liv'd joy but serv'd to throw
More bitterness amid my cup of woe:
For, tho' I tended all a mother's care,
All human aid,—had Heaven agreed to spare;
And tho' he would not let a look betray,
Yet did he waste and linger, day by day;
And, slowly as a snow-wreath, melt away.
But when at last he found concealment vain,
For all announc'd the approaching end too plain,
Oh! o'er his wasted figure as I hung,
God seem'd to gift him with an angel's tongue;
And planted powers of persuasion there,
That might have sooth'd, if aught could soothe, despair.
Thus, for three months—but oh! excuse the rest,
For crowding memory suffocates my breast.
The look, the voice, to life's extremest goal
Beaming and preaching comfort to my soul—
Preach comfort to these rocks!—Almighty God,
Where do I run?—forgive—I kiss the rod.
And tho' it long have crush'd me to the dust,
'Tis but in joy to raise me:—thou art just.
And thou, his minister, whom he hath led
In charity, to cheer the Widow's shed;
(Still, his chief mercies on the Widow rest,
As when his Son the weeping Nainite blest.)

Tho' the recall of things and times endear'd
Have wak'd old woes, yet, doubt not, I am cheer'd ;
In all my woes surpassing bliss I find,
A bosom humbled, and a heart resign'd.
And now, my poor boy's study shall unveil
What still remains unfinish'd of my tale.
Thus saying, from a drawer a key she took,
And, gazing on it with a wistful look,
Then heaving from her breast a pensive sigh,
That threw the tears in streams into her eye,
Put it into my hand. I clomb the stair ;
The rusty lock, recoiling, gave a jar ;
And at the sound, barking and mad with joy,
With ears wild-waving, and with sparkling eye,
A little spaniel bounded to the door,
Unnotic'd, it had lain so still, before.
Then suddenly, outbursting from below,
I heard the Widow's sobs, and moans of woe ;
It was her dear boy's favorite, his pride,
By day, by night, for ever at his side,—
It's head upon his bosom when he died.
With joyous cry into the room it sped,
And leap'd upon a little rushy bed,
Its ancient seat, for there, the live-long day,
Fast by its dear-lov'd master's side it lay ;
And when the hour of exercise drew nigh,
Kept gazing at him with a watchful eye,
Mark'd every motion, view'd the closing book,
The pen laid down, with an impatient look :
Then when he rose, with bark and frantic play,
Danc'd round his feet, and rushing led the way.

His books lay open, papers strewn around
On chairs, or loosely scatter'd on the ground,
Tokening unfinish'd study, seem'd to woo
Their weary master to his toils anew.
A curtain clos'd the window, not that aught
Of novelty could pass to scatter thought,
But there the sun-tipp'd rocks, and glowing tarn,
Plac'd full in view, would make his bosom yearn,
Bear eyes and mind from sterner toils away,
'Mid scenes, forbidden at that hour, to stray.
A frock, that seem'd for mountain toils ordain'd,
Whose pockets, pencil, books, and flute contain'd,
Lay on a chair-back indolently slung,
As but that moment from his shoulder flung.
Unconsciously upon the chair I sate,
The lingering habitant's return to wait;
Then, starting, as from a deep trance, awoke,
And sighing left, and turn'd the chamber's lock.
With promises again to seek her dell,
I bade the Widow and the rocks farewell.
By her direction down a pass defil'd,
The favorite haunt, she told me, of her child.
A foamy torrent down its rocky length
Pour'd from the tarn, rejoicing in its strength.
Just half-way down the rocky sides withdrew,
And gave an amphitheatre to view;
And up the steep ascent, by just degrees,
Rose, like a circling audience, stately trees;
All smoothest turf beneath, that to the edge
Of the stream's chasm shot forth a verdant ledge:
Hence to the west, and far beneath, was spied
The long-drawn vale; beyond, the ocean's tide.

And to this spot the dying youth each day
Was carried, and here breath'd his last away:
'Twas just as sunset drest the vale, the sea,
The cliffs, in his most costly imagery,
Costly as the last feast we set before
The friend whom fate forbids to meet with more.
A wistful look he threw around, and sigh'd,
And look'd again—and in that look he died.
Hallow'd by such event, the banky sod
Is with a superstitious reverence trod.
'Tis call'd, "The scholar's dingle," and my feet
Have often hasted to its turfy seat,
And oft in lonely reverie, as I pore,
I fancy, rising 'mid the torrent's roar,
The voice of the poor youth, and with a sigh
Think, were he now alive, how blest were I.
Blest in my solitude a friend to find,
Alike in age, in rank, pursuits, and mind.
Yet such refin'd communion had, I fear,
Sustain'd my mind above my duty's sphere.
For God, when first he call'd me to his cure,
Gave me in charge the ignorant and poor,
Bade me with them, in pattern of his Son,
Strike every chord of mind in unison.
Therefore his will be done, and thus I quell
Each murmur, and thus bid each bootless wish farewell.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PENSIONERS OF THE FAMILY.

There is one duty which is an especial object with every church, that of administering to the sick and needy; and in every age its holy gate has been crowded by the orphan and the widow, awaiting their daily dole of support and comfort from the hands of the sacred household. Of course, every family which God hath blessed with the means, must, in this instance, follow the example of its great model, and, in order to pursue it with due effect, must have laid down a certain plan, for nothing requires due order and consideration so much as the effectual distribution of charity. Resources must be carefully provided, objects properly selected, opportunities diligently arrested: so that it demands the apparently contrasted talents of economy

and liberality, of caution and promptitude, of stern denial and ready acquiescence. I was therefore curious to know how the Rector, with whom the close relation of a family to a church was so fundamental a notion, regulated this important duty. An opportunity soon offered itself of obtaining the desired information.

I had lately given up much of my time to visiting an aged bedridden parishioner, whose cottage stood in a remote part of the parish. One day, my friend accompanied me for the sake of the walk, which was of a character highly picturesque. I left him walking up and down in a pathway, in front of the cottage, while I entered, and went up stairs; the bed was close to the window, so that the old man could amuse himself by looking out upon the fields, which he had long ceased to tread, and seeing passengers go by, whom, on that occasion only, he could see. As I was sitting and talking with him at his bed-side, he happened, during a short pause, to look through his window. I was much surprised to see him suddenly shrink back in fright and astonishment, and then return to gaze with intense eagerness and extreme agitation. It must be the old Rector's spirit, he muttered half to me, half to

himself. I looked out, and there saw my friend in full view of the window. As I had often heard it observed by old people that he had grown into a strong resemblance of his father, the sick man's agitation was immediately explained; in a short time, I persuaded him of the truth, and, at his earnest request, went and brought my friend up stairs—a scene ensued, which I shall not attempt to paint. He had been, when a lame and sickly boy, one of my friend's pensioners, to explain which term, I shall employ his own words as nearly as my memory can serve me.

As well to ensure regularity of distribution, as to imbue his children with due sympathy for their less fortunate brethren, my father used to divide the numerous pensioners upon his bounty into two portions, one of which he set apart for his own personal attention, the other he distributed among his children—the males to the boys, the females to the girls; thus, each of us had sometimes as many as five or six on his hands at the same time. To these we distributed at the door from a stock made up among ourselves, or went on messages from my father, of love and charity; so that we were his censer-boys, and flang far and wide the odour of

his bounty. And he, like the grand model of Christian imitation, sent forth in our persons his apostles and disciples, to administer under his master's blessing to the healing of the sick, and comforting of the afflicted. Scrip and purse, indeed, we bore, and gold and silver, but not for ourselves; nor went we as sheep among wolves, but were every where caressed with the kindest attentions. "Ah! God bless you, young master, and all your family, and long keep your father among us!" was a salutation familiar to me from the mouths of the peasantry, as they met me on my path with my basket in hand, which revealed the purpose on which I was bent; and many a blessing have I received on my childish head, from a death-bed. A melancholy employment this, you will here say, for a lively boy. I did not, however, find it so: at least, the pleasure infinitely outweighed the pain. It gave me the means of satisfying the curiosity and eagerness peculiar to my years, excited my interest in the highest degree, so that I needed no story-book to stir up my drowsy imagination, and give healthy exercise to the tender feelings of the heart. With what delight and interest have I watched the reviving health of the person assigned for my visits, with

perhaps a lurking satisfaction of it being due in some measure to myself. How joyous have I felt, when I went as the messenger of good news from my father to some poor downcast of need and sorrow. Oh! it was anticipating on earth the blissful and glorious privilege of the angels in heaven. Man cannot learn at too early a period what sorrow is, and acknowledge that it is his due, so that, knowing its nature, and seeing that it is inevitable, he may prepare for his day of trial, and, at the same time, be laying up a remedy against it, by being ever prompt to render that assistance which he may one day need himself. But, alas! how few are the opportunities afforded to the youthful inmates of an affluent home, of obtaining this knowledge, how diligently, should I not rather say, are they excluded. They, accordingly, can scarcely believe, even when they hear, the accounts of the wide extent of misery amid which their happy ark of home is floating; they think them exaggerated, and shut up their heart without further inquiry. Many an opportunity, however, had we. Ample experience taught us the force of the expression, "all sorts and conditions of men." Almost daily we sallied forth from a happy home to scenes of distress; from a paradise, as it were,

where every thing was supplied, unbidden, to hand, we went forth to the earth, put under the curse of labour and sorrow. We saw plainly, and acknowledged freely, our common lot. Thus my father kept us clear of that speculative benevolence which shrinks from practice, and corrupts the heart by an ill-grounded vanity and self-applause: thus he saved us from the sad results of an imagination, which, surrounded by scenes of luxurious tranquillity, has recourse to the speculative contemplation of the reverse, in order to enjoy that pleasure, which the poet says we experience on beholding from land a storm raging at sea; full sorry would such spectators be to engage in that storm, and stretch forth a hand to the shipwrecked sufferers. O, my friend, you yourself well know how much, how very much is to be learned from conversation with the poor; learning the conditions of our nature from them and from the rich, is the same thing as drawing precepts from practice and from books. To see punishment following sin, put aside the many delays formed by wealth and influence, all the stays which break the sinner's fall, and let him gradually down; put these aside, and go to the poor. See, there, intemperance, sickness, want, following each other,

without a single stage between. O, among the poor, justice is poetical indeed! To see real sickness, put aside all its artificial consolations, set a pallet for a bed, patience for palliatives, a family starving, from the sick man's intermission of work, in whose ghastly faces he may count the weary days of his illness, and which salute him more ghastly each succeeding day; set this for a family which brings every morning smiles on their ruddy countenances to cheer him. On one point, indeed, I have observed that the poor man has ample compensation. Look at his death-bed—he has nothing to lose, and all to gain, and therefore quits life with a resignation seldom seen among his richer brethren.

My father used to remark that none can experience the full rights and advantages of Christian citizenship, unless he maintain the relations which connect him with the ranks both above and below. To cultivate the knowledge of those above, requires little encouragement. The whole world cheers us on. But, to be properly acquainted with those below, requires no ordinary urging. Christ only is our encourager here; here lies our trial, and here our grand reward.

In the exercise of these goodly offices I continued to the last, even up to the very day on which I left home, never to see it again, (for I cannot call this desolate house home,) and not less by choice than by obedience to my father's pleasure. A strange education, methinks, I hear you suggest, for a soldier: much more adapted for a priest. But allow me to reply, that the qualities which form the good soldier and the good priest, are much more nearly allied than the world is commonly disposed to think. One is in the flesh what the other is in the spirit: and the vigilance, the fortitude, the seizure of opportunities, the adaptation to circumstances, the winning of men's hearts, and the tongue of persuasion, which all will agree to be necessary to the perfect priest, few will assuredly deny to be as necessary to the accomplished soldier. For my own part, I can say with confidence, that I have felt this to have been the most valuable portion of my whole education, as a soldier. I learnt my best weapons in the house of peace. I thus became acquainted with the human heart, I could enter into the thoughts and feelings of rude uneducated men, I was acquainted with numberless little attentions and ways of winning good will, which it is too late

to learn after the attainment of manhood, when the observation is not sufficiently curious or minute so as to discern them, nor temper flexible enough to employ. Thus I was instructed to deal with inferiors with kindness, and yet with dignity; and the men placed under my command, soon discovering my sympathy, were zealous to gratify me with the strictest obedience. Little, indeed, did I think what an important lesson I was learning, and on what a theatre I should employ its results, when I went out and came in as my father's messenger among the poor, and that my acquaintance with the hearts of Valehead would open to me the bosoms of India. Not a single day thus spent in my boyhood was lost upon my future profession, and I have learned the important result, that the soldier, no less than the man of peace, will do well to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

As we thus conversed, we crossed the green of a little hamlet, surrounded by cottages, each with its garden of flowers, (always a good sign of the inmates within,) and vine or honeysuckle creeping over the walls, and hanging down in festoons from the chimney top. We stopped a moment to look at the cheerful scene.

Of every one of these habitations, said my friend, I know the interior well, and have a tale connected with each. There lived my instructors in the knowledge of the human heart. But where, alas! are they? Where are those many faces that smiled on me as I uplifted the latch, and brought some cheering message from my father? Alas me!

I pass unheeded and alone,
Where never thus I past before;
I pass by gates whence friends have gone,
Who never there shall enter more:
A stranger's face
In every place
I meet, where all were known, and see
Eyes that ne'er look in turn on me.

I pass thro' churchyards, snatch a glance
On names belov'd—all that is left
Of what did life's each breath enhance,
And mourn as yesterday bereft.
The very tomb
Hath met its doom,
And slabs, that often gave a seat
To me and mine, no longer greet.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FAMILY EXCURSION.

Our church had its joyful days of procession, said my friend. In the summer season, we made a point of paying at least one visit to the summit of yonder mountain, which, rugged and precipitous as it hence appears, affords upon its summit the softest turf, where you may recline most luxuriously while you feast your eyes upon the vast and varied extent of view which it commands. One of the days set apart for this pilgrimage was the anniversary of the marriage of our parents. As soon as the duties of the morning were concluded, thither we sallied forth in a long troop, exciting, in no small degree, the interest and curiosity of the neighbourhood as we past. There were several stages at which we paused, as at favorite shrines, remarkable

for some natural beauty, which we always called upon the stranger to admire. Thither I propose our walking this day. As I had often intended visiting the mountain, but had hitherto neglected it as being at any time within my reach, I joyfully consented. It was one of those beautiful days in June, which we owe to a gentle S. W. wind, (too often he is our greatest scourge,) when the lights are clear and liquid, and the shades deep, and continually shifting. Our road ran along the side of the river, which now flowed through open pastures, now through woods which fringed the hills on either side, and sometimes pushed their skirts into the stream, and sometimes terminated abruptly on the top of a lofty precipice. Much were we amused, as, emerging now and then from the gloom of the woods into the sunshine, we startled the young fry from the warm shallows, whose glassy smoothness was, suddenly, roughly broken by their terrified shoals, while their hasty flight was announced by a loud splash; and as raising our eyes immediately after this, and looking up the stream, we beheld the grey heron also taking the alarm, and rising on the wing, with his usual business-like solemnity, from the extremity of the shingly promontory where he

had been fishing; or, as carrying our eye further still, we saw the stream receding and darkening in the woody distance, here and there shoot into sudden light, now in the shape of brilliant stars, now of bright edgy lines, giving a momentary flash, as the flies, sporting on the surface, allured the fish to rise, or a gentle breath of wind raised a wave, or broke the surface against a ledge of rock. We paused at all the appointed stages, the last of which was a cavern, forming the mouth of an old Roman copper mine, and affording a refreshing shade; from its recess the view appeared to peculiar advantage, set in a framework of rock and ivy. We reached at length the summit, guided by a tumbling brook about two-thirds of the way up; the view most amply, indeed, repaid the toil, being a delightful mixture of stream, dell, and mountain, except in one direction, where the long drawn vale extended into a plain, and the plain met the horizon with the spires and towers of a distant city, indenting the sky; towards those spires, the stream of our valley was seen to wind, gleaming brightly to the eye, here and there, in long reaches, ever as his capricious course came in a line between the eye and the town.

Do you not think, said my companion, as soon

as we were seated on the smooth turf, that a recreation of this kind was well suited to the celebration of the anniversary of our parents' marriage, of the day whence all the children could date a common birth? Having uppermost in our minds an event to which we owed our birth into this world of sense, which hence appears so beautiful, we enjoyed its beauties with a keener relish, and with hearts most thankfully lifted up to our glorious and bounteous Maker. We turned from the view with increased affection to the faces of the blessed instruments of his mercy, from whom we had derived its enjoyment, but, above all, had obtained a place within the pale of his gospel. We felt, indeed, brought into a land of promise, within and without, in soul and in body. It was fitting that we should feel, at such a time, peculiarly moved towards our conductors.

My father, than whom no one looked on the face of nature with a fonder eye, was always greatly excited upon this occasion. After a long and silent contemplation of the scene before him, he would point out to us particular spots, and pour forth, in most eloquent strain, a body of remarks calculated to carry our thoughts far

beyond the forms of varied dust which were before us. Some of these suggest themselves to me at this moment, at the review of the scene, and if you will not judge of their worth by my poor and scanty means of expression, I will venture to detail one or two. The lights, as they have this moment disposed themselves, bring one immediately to mind. A bright gleam is resting on the knoll where stands the church and manor-house, while the rest of the valley being in shade, goes to give depth to the black mountains encircling it; they seem effectually to guard and fence it in, as it were some sacred spot. Even so, my children, doth God protect us, and behind those dark rocky walls I can imagine all the ills of the world stayed in their course, and unable to scale and leap into our fold. This is no far-fetched analogy, for in such a spirit the divine poet looked upon his beloved Jerusalem, and cried out, "The hills stand about Jerusalem. Even so standeth the Lord round about his people, from this time forth for evermore, for the rod of the ungodly cometh not into the lot of the righteous."—(Ps. cxxv. 2.) But that barrier was burst as soon as what it guarded ceased to be holy.

Children, let us take heed to ourselves. Let us beware lest a spiritual Babylon pour her myriads in, and overthrow our temple.

On that same day, (which I have especial reasons for remembering, since it was to me the last of these excursions,) towards evening, the sky became overcast; the distant hills retired from view amid storms, which, shortly after, we beheld in full march down the several valleys, uniting in that immediately at our feet; they soon snatched it from our sight, and then beat in gusts of wind and masses of clouds against our mountain, while a billowy fog, like spray, wreathed up the chasms, and advanced in menacing volumes towards us; in a few minutes, the only spot of earth which we could see was the ground on which we stood. We formed a ring against the enemy's attack, the females in the centre, my father and his boys in front, facing the brunt of the storm. We gazed on an ocean of clouds beneath us, and seemed like the survivors of a deluge; to the imagination of all present, I believe, was exhibited a lively representation of Noah and his family; and the opportunity, you may be sure, was not suffered by my father to escape. See, he said, as he stood overtopping us all with his hoary patriarchal

head, see, children, to what a narrow circle was once reduced the church of God, even to a single family less numerous than ourselves, and looking in sad reality, as we now in appearance, upon a deluged world. Such were the fruits of disobedience. Let us bless his holy name that in our days countless families from north and south, and east and west, contribute to fill up the wide extent of that glorious society. So far from having the melancholy satisfaction of being sole survivors, we are conscious of thousands whom we know not in the flesh, working together with us in the spirit, as certainly as we feel assured that behind the veil of those clouds, hearts are beating in the vale beneath, though the sight of man and man's works be denied us. And when we descend from our mountain, it will not be with us as with them from Ararat, who came down upon a lifeless world, and amid monuments of God's wrath; but we shall meet again with friendly and familiar faces, enter amid the crowd of God's visible blessings, and partaking with our neighbours of his mercies, join with them also in his praises.

On another occasion he would dwell upon the landscape, as upon a page of history unfolded before us; it was a page written, indeed,

in living characters, for the whole field of view was studded with monuments of days gone by, from the "old poetic mountain," espied but in clear weather, and peeping into our world through a narrow nick in the bounding mountain chain, to the massy piles of rock at our feet: to all he could affix some interesting anecdote, and studied to impress upon our hearts the blessedness of the times in which God had placed us, and make us lift them up in thankfulness for such great benefits, civil and religious. He would point out, and lead us through the progress of civilization, beginning with the grassy triple and circular mound of the Aboriginal, on the neighbouring summit, and, passing through the ruined feudal castle on the slope beneath, end with the historic town seen on the verge of the horizon. And, similarly, he would conduct us from the darkest superstition to the brightness of our undefiled religion, by directing our eye in succession to the Druid's circle standing in the solitude of the mountain pasture, then to the ivy-mantled abbey in the glen beside the stream below, and, lastly, to our plain and simple village church, crowning the sunny knoll. Never were forgotten the lessons which we learned on this joyous day; they fell

on a soil well prepared, by every circumstance of the occasion, to receive them. In them we read the history of our race, and they were not arbitrary signs like letters, nor mere representations like pictures, but actual monuments, exhibiting in themselves the effects of ages past, witnesses which had been present at the transactions, the memory of which they preserved. Thus they all had life, character, and language, and, posted on our commanding height, we felt that we stood on an elevation, not only in the midst of space, but of time also. But I will not at present overwhelm you with more of my recollections; I have detailed sufficient to shew you how my father turned every little incident to account, and rendered even these excursions of pleasure a kind of holy pilgrimage.

Often, too, have I rambled here alone, and spent hours upon this peak in that species of reverie in which the mind almost passively suffers the entrance of the vast flood of ideas which is pouring in from all the objects around. These, in due time, when the fermentation which their assemblage produces is over, assume speciality and place, become regular components of our frame of mind, and thus we go on, unconsciously, from wealth to wealth. I have

found a kind of sketch-book, evidently thus formed by one of my brothers. It registers the principal ideas which he derived from any particular spot. They are entered in verse, as may be expected: that being by far the best, if not the only means of making out a clear and pithy summary of the mind's thoughts at any moment. (I will append some extracts to this Chapter.)

We staid talking and lingering on the summit of the mountain, and were overtaken by night through being unable to quit the sight of a magnificent sunset. A portion of the mountainous circle seemed dissolved into transparent rosy-coloured air, then seemed to recover substance, and glowed like molten iron; then it appeared gradually to cool, going through the successive shades of violet, purple, and indigo. At length, it became a black mass, when the evening star, assuming her full brightness, warned us to take advantage of her scanty light to hurry down the hill.

I.

THE STORM.

Oft on this headland's lordly brow
My prime delight hath been to sit,
And watch the storm in march below
Across the varied landscape flit;

And as each favorite hill or dell
In gleam arose, in shadow fell,
I have moralis'd the view,
And " thus," have said, " upon the world,
Is joy diffus'd, or sorrow hurl'd:
It is our nature's due.

" Thus on life's shifting scene I pore,
Round friendship's circle watch it go;
See this, in fortune's sunshine soar;
That, sink from sight in shades of woe,
Impassive at my central seat."
Thus as I mus'd, the stormy sleet
Pour'd bursting on my head:
O'erwhelming darkness clos'd me in,
Winds roar'd around with deafening din,
Sun, hill, and dale were fled.

It ceas'd at length, and as it past,
A voice in still small accents swell'd
On the last sighings of the blast,
And forth this solemn counsel held:
" Poor mortal! dost thou deem to gaze
At ease upon life's chequer'd ways?—
Know: unchastis'd to learn
Is given to nought that breathes below,
As now this shower, the shower of woe
Must wrap thee in thy turn.

" Yet, faint not: when the shower is sped,
With fresher life see nature heave.
So thou uplift thy dripping head,
And read and trust the pledge I leave.

I rais'd my head : no cloud appear'd,
Aloft the kingly sun career'd
Thro' fields of deepest blue ;
Unveil'd in light each mountain stood,
Replenish'd glanc'd each sparkling flood ;
Time prov'd the pledge was true."

II.

THE ASCENT.

Shrouded in mist our valley lay,
When to yon brow I bent my way,
And, led by faltering step and grope,
I trod at length his rising slope ;
Then suddenly emerg'd and free,
With head above that misty sea,
I stood : the fleecy cloud still prest
Its wreathed billows round my breast.
Then towering o'er my head on high,
In all the pride of clear blue sky,
With all the tints of sunrise beaming,
Here dewy rocks like mirrors gleaming,
There glens in dark-blue shadows lying,
Which hasty night had left in flying,
The peak his rugged front uprear'd,
And o'er the hoary ocean peer'd.
Like shipwreck'd mariner I stood,
Whom, borne all night on ocean's flood,
Morn brings beneath some towering shore,
His head the surge scarce peering o'er,

When now his numbed fingers clasp
The saving plank with feeble grasp.
Refulgent scene! it pictur'd well
What my mind's pilgrimage befell,
When doubt's uncomfortable cloud,
That penn'd me long in chilly shroud,
Roll'd its imprisoning fleece away,
And on me burst the mental day.
O thrilling triumph! to behold
Error's dark mists beneath us roll'd,
Truth's adamantine cape on high
Up-pointing to the promis'd sky,
And, drest in all its radiance clear,
Fixing our sight and bosom there.
Refulgent scene! and well it shew'd
To saints the goal of sorrow's road,
When drizzly chill, with touch unblest,
Hath struck the heart, congeal'd the breast:
From every sight around him driven,
The sufferer lifts his head to heaven;
He starts in extasied surprise—
There, soaring in the cloudless skies,
Faith's rock in dazzling glory glows,
And gathers every beam that flows
From the immortal fount above,
The sun of righteousness and love.
Emblem of faith, of truth! Oh yet
Another object thou dost set,
Bright rock! before this mental eye:
Oh! when thy radiant brow I spy
Beaming above my rising head,
While clouds around my breast are spread,

I think of that triumphant day,
When, earth's dim curtain roll'd away,
Heaven's gates shall burst upon the sight,
And all be knowledge, bliss, and light.
Emblem of faith, of truth, of heaven!
When on the world's rude ocean driven,
I'll think of thee, and thou shalt teach
Thy bright realities to reach.

III.

THE HILL-TOP.

'Twas dawn's deep silence, and I stood
On Breddin's domineering brow:
I gaz'd;—but, spread like ocean's flood,
Mist rested upon all below.
On to the horizon's mottled zone,
Uncurl'd, the snowlike surface shone,
And, studded here and there,
Like isles o'er glittering ocean spread,
The mountain peaks uprear'd their head,
And gloried in mid air.

The sun his ruddy disk at length
Upheav'd above that hoary veil,
And from the eastern gate, all strength,
Outrush'd the winged morning gale;
And soon in billowy wreaths ascending,
Earth, sky, in dim confusion blending,

The sleepy ocean woke,
Rav'd up the mountain at my feet,
And, o'er his isles, with drizzly sheet
Unpiteously broke.

But, seen amid the rude commotion,
A rainbow's circlet, dewy bright,
Sate on the bosom of the ocean,
Blest prelude to returning light.
Slowly at length in air disperst
Updrew the veil: unprison'd burst
The glory from below:
Bound with the welkin's azure girth,
All gladness, re-appearing earth,
Laugh'd with a gemmy glow.

My soul the inspiration caught,
And drank it to its inmost cell;
Gaz'd not some angel thus, methought,
From spirit's crystal citadel,
And seeking in this deep abyss
The future partner of his bliss,
Cast longing looks in vain.
They rested on the still expanse
Of doubt, of fear, of ignorance,
Of crime, of care, of pain.

But Oh! what throngs of seraphim
Crowded the heights of bliss that day,
When pour'd upon the curtain dim
Our sun of life with wakening ray.

How rang Hosannas as it broke
Dispers'd beneath his fiery stroke—
Alas! in war, in blood,
In tumult wild it broke; amid
His work the sun himself seem'd hid,
Extinct his golden flood.

But deafening rose the hymn, when all
The promis'd view so long denied
Burst from beneath the rended pall;
And outspread lay in all its pride,
With all its bowers of bliss bright beaming,
With all its streams of life far gleaming,
Recover'd Paradise.
"How goodly are your tents, how fair
Your mansions! hail, heaven's choicest care!
Hail, partner of the skies!"

IV.

THE REVIEW.

I sat on Berwyn's lofty crest,
And thence the extended path survey'd
O'er which my busy foot had prest
From morning's sun to evening's shade;
And deeper, as I ponder'd, grew
My thoughts upon that long review.
Oh! could I thus explore,
I cried, that weary pilgrimage
Which I must press from youth to age,
Thus gaze its windings o'er.

Yon flowery meadows far away,
Where shines the sun with vigorous beam,
Where rivers in long mazes stray,
And trees o'ershade the gentle stream,
There runs a path prest hours ago;
The morn and I were fresh in glow.
Oh! when I there look back,
I think of days far, far remote,
On which fond memory loves to doat,
'Tis childhood's flowery track.

Yon sultry hill, whose blooming side
With gaudy furze and heath is drest,
Up which with straining strength I hied,
Eager to win his towery crest;
And still before my cheated eyes,
Saw summit beyond summit rise,
Yet gloried as they rose;
Still forward kept my eager face,
Scorn'd all behind—behold the race
Where youth careering goes.

Yon level ridge, on either hand,
Which cliffs as towery walls sustain,
Where the excursive eyes command
All left behind, and gaze with pain:
But softer comes the river's roar,
And sounds that shook the ear before,
And wider roams the eye,
And vales, like distant worlds, to sight
Emerge in shifting shade and light:
There manhood's pathways lie.

And now the topmost ridge is won,
And gently rising to the peak
Ascends my path ; but desert stone
Is all around, all bare and bleak:
And oft, and often I look back,
And gaze upon my former track,
Regret each finish'd stage ;
Sharp blows the wind, my moisten'd eye
Is dull, thick clouds are floating by:
Behold the track of age.

And now the sun is set, and night
O'er all my path's extent is spread.
I look behind, and see! his light
Along the western vale is shed ;
And thither I descend.—Adieu,
Valley and paths! ye fade from view.
Oh! thus reliev'd from care,
Thus calm may I quit life's last verge,
E'en thus my journey downward urge,
To meet fresh glories there.

V.

THE BROOK.

Yet once again, beloved stream,
I stand within thy bathing spray ;
Yet once again, blest glen, I dream
In thy deep gloom the hours away.

How different from the dreams of yore,
Ere joy was mated with its bane;
Ere Time had open'd all his store
Of scenes, of years, of woe, of pain.

Yea! I am chang'd, not thou; for still
Thy giant oak o'ershades my head:
Thy massy slab I press, and fill
My palm from thy translucent bed.

Yet let me dream these scenes again,
When last I press'd this lichen'd stone;
Oh! how they course my hurried brain,
Appear, pain, gladden, and are gone.

Around from well-known rock and tree,
Faces to touch of memory start;
The wild is peopled!—join'd I see
Whom years, and earth, and ocean part.

Now words I hear, which long ago
Here died amid the sighing wind;
And smiles and laughter round me flow,
Long parted from their native mind.

And, broken now my trance, I mourn,
And try to conjure up anew;
Then weep for what shall ne'er return,
And long for what I ne'er must view.

But, hark! proclaiming from yon wood
A solemn voice in accents clear,—
"Poor mortal, cease thy fretful mood,
Nor seek lost friends, past moments here:

" Far other friends my works suggest,
Far other times and seasons tell ;
My prophets ! they instruct thy breast
With bright futurity to swell.

" Of me they tell, my hand portend
Which laid their piles, their colours strew'd ;
Of me, the everlasting friend
In youth, age, crowd, and solitude ;

" Whom years, and earth, and ocean's tide
From my blest comrade cannot sever ;
Whose words once heard for ay abide,
Whose smiles around thee flow for ever."

VI.

THE RAINBOW.

Striding athwart yon gloomy mass,
Which clouds in clouds inwreath'd up-pile,
How bright the rainbow's colours pass,
And force the angry heavens to smile ;
And where its radiant feet repose
On earth, a liquid glory glows
Around the heavenly guest :
Link'd by the gem-like bridge, this earth
Seems join'd to heaven, as at its birth,
Ere sin the bond suppress.

Enrapt I view the dazzling scene,
And, as the vivid colours start,
Fits of reflection come between
Each gaze, and rouse my listless heart.
Fond gazer! beauteous as they shine,
To thee, those colours are a sign
Of sorrow and of care;
Now, on some houseless wanderer, beat
The drenching rain, the piercing sleet,
And wring the wretch's prayer.

Oh! therefore, all indulgent Heaven,
Grant me, with trembling and with awe,
To use each earthly blessing given,
And, using, own thy wisdom's law;
Own that each joy I feel or know
Is partner to another's woe:
I laugh amid lament;
And, as time's restless wheel goes round,
My turn for sorrow must be found,
My hour of trial sent.

Oh! when thou givest, give, I pray,
A heart awake to future ill;
And when thou takest, take away
Each feeling rebel to thy will.
Humble in wealth, for wealth will fly,
Patient in woe, for woe will die,
To every lot resign'd:
So let me view life's gleamy scene,
And happy hours, with bow serene,
Still warn of woe behind.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SERVANTS OF THE FAMILY.

On a beautiful evening in the month of August, I accompanied my friend in one of his long rambles. Having threaded a winding glen, whose furious stream we were obliged several times to cross, we arrived at a green basin among the mountains. In its centre stood a cluster of cottages, the roofs of which, formed of large rude slabs projecting far beyond the walls, gave plain evidence of the inhospitality of the climate. As our object was to find a short cut across the mountains, and pass the topmost ridge before sunset, (for thenceforward the country was well known to us,) we approached to inquire our way. As we drew near, we heard a voice proceeding from one of them, the door of which stood open before us. On drawing still nearer, and listening, we found that it was the voice of one reading.

Shortly after, it assumed the tone of prayer; and, as soon as I could distinguish the words, I clearly recognised the domestic liturgy of the Rectory. We immediately and instinctively kneeled down as near as we could, without attracting notice and causing disturbance; the conclusion was made by the family hymn, which I have already presented to the reader; and wonderful indeed was its effect upon us, as it came forth now from a deep, firm, and single voice, now from a chorus of trebles, while an echo from the rocks, heard at each pause, seemed to proclaim that the wild and solitary places were glad also. I cannot describe the agitation of my friend, nor attempt to pourtray the scene which followed; for in the father of this family we found the son of the old gardener of the Rectory, to which service he had himself succeeded during the latter years of the Rector's life. It was with difficulty that we tore ourselves from the spot. On resuming our way, my friend continued long silent. At last, we reached the summit of the ridge, just as the sun was making his plunge beneath the horizon. Before we trod the first downward step, he cast an earnest look at the cottager's dell whence we had emerged, and then began.

Now, said he, I feel once again in a strange land. I am as one who, having most unexpectedly discovered in a foreign soil a colony of his mother country, with her rites, language, and countenances, is obliged to quit it soon as found, and to resume his melancholy exile. How many things then strike his notice to which familiarity had formerly blinded him. I could pass day after day among the inhabitants of that dell, and am determined to revisit it before long; even already many faded traces have been revived in my memory, and I have a more comprehensive view of my father's plan than I had before. That simple service, which we have been just witnessing, came over me like a fine fragrance left behind by my father's good deeds and works of love. For imagine not that his children were the sole objects of his domestic care and instruction. He regarded his servants as no less committed to his charge, as not less important pensioners upon his responsibility. Well he judged, and well he was rewarded. I am convinced that the most careful and fastidious education of children must be very much influenced by the characters of the servants. It is impossible that they should not be very much in each the other's company. And, besides the services by which the servants en-

gage the affections of the child, their minds are much more upon a level with his. They are but a species of grown-up children. Hence he finds there a sympathy which he seeks in vain in the refined and cultivated mind of his parent. There he meets with his own curiosity, minuteness of observation, love of detail, eagerness of wonders, simplicity of thought, and plainness of expression, which win his confidence and attachment, at the same time that their comparatively great experience and their bodily advantages exact a deference. Let the scholar and the rustic tell a story to a child. The former will soon be obliged to yield the palm to his less accomplished rival. Hence the child is continually imbibing the servant's notions, and hangs upon his lips. It gives us a glorious idea of God's economy when we find the care or neglect of the minds of our servants rewarded or visited in the minds of our children, and are aware that not only what we have ourselves sown in the one we shall reap in the other, but also what we have allowed the great enemy to sow in the one we shall also reap in the other. The servant, in many respects, forms a most important medium between the parent and child, delivering to it, in a form suited to its capacities, (to which the

parent, more especially the father, often finds it most difficult to descend,) what he has received in a form adapted to riper years. And, as the food which the mother eats is of too strong and stimulating a nature to be given immediately to her infant offspring, but in her breasts becomes wholesome milk, so passes the father's knowledge through the bosom of a faithful and pious servant to his child, coming to him thus in a form more suitable to his young faculties. Great, therefore, was my father's concern upon the right instruction of his servants, and great I acknowledge to have been the good which I have received from him in this indirect manner. From our old gardener we received, perhaps, the best portion of this indirectly transmitted knowledge. As we stood by, and watched with childish curiosity his various operations, and beset him with inquiries, as he sowed the seed, planted the root, pruned the bough, or dug and turned up the worm, while the sound of his spade brought the robins to him, birds to which, in children's minds, a kind of sacredness is attached, he had always some moral or religious application ready, which came pithily to our understandings and impressively upon our hearts. Oftentimes, too, on these occasions he would,

half in the way of obtaining information, which he supposed we might have received from our father, half in the way of giving instruction, examine us in our knowledge, and betrayed, I remember, amid all his authority, an impression that we were to be, in no long time, vastly his superiors upon that head. In fact, he treated us much in the same way as our great house-dog had done when we were younger still, who, while he would playfully throw us down, turn us over with his nose, lay his immense paw upon us, or take our hands or legs between his fearful rows of teeth, yet in all plainly discovered, by a peculiar manner, how well aware he was that he was dealing with future masters. I shall always think it a good sign of a child to be fond of the gardener, if at least he be such as ours was. That servant's occupation is in a spot which excites good feelings, and is consecrated by Scripture, is about a work interesting from its very nature, and associated also with God's word; it encounters the child seldom in his hours of fretful caprice and bustle, but rather of contentment and calm, produced by the beautiful variety of its inhabitants. What a treasure then for a parent to have in such a place a minister, as it were, (and not to be despised

for his homeliness,) ready to take advantage of this frame of mind, to apply the many interesting incidents and objects there occurring, and pour into the child's ear the knowledge of God. Much did I draw from him which I might in vain have sought from the wisdom of the philosopher, whose abstruse, unpractical speculations, and vague language, I would gladly even now exchange for the compression of thought, the natural sentiments, the simplicity and yet depth of feeling, and the liquid clearness of expression peculiar to the rightly instructed rustic.

My father threw a certain dignity around the character of our servants, by making us consider them as ministers of God's comforts, as attendants on the wants which his bounty satisfied. And while he bade us think with gratitude and love upon their faithful attention and watchful observance, he directed us to the inestimable love and the unwearied care of him who took upon himself the form of a servant, waited in all humility upon his disciples, became the minister to our spiritual wants, and wrought the work of our redemption. Associated thus in our minds, our servants, you may suppose, were treated with meekness, gentleness, and

forbearance, as fellow-servants of our heavenly Master, and with respect and kindness as representatives of our continual protector, and ministers of his bounty. We gathered, too, from their services to us what we also owed to him; and while the duties of the nurse represented in the most affecting manner his love and care, the faithful hoary-headed steward put us in mind of our responsibility. Thus the very help and comfort which we derived from them was continually instructive; for their fidelity and alacrity was often a rebuke, always a spur, to us in our duty towards our eternal Master, who, by so kind and delightful a medium, was pleased to remind us every day of himself: there was a continual action and re-action going on: the more their services prompted us to think of our own due to our Master in heaven, the more considerate and meek became our conduct to them, and again, in return, the more ardent their zeal and faithfulness towards us. Thus there was no jealous and exacting authority on the one side, nor eye service and dishonest subterfuge on the other. We were associated by the most blessed of bonds, all their spiritual knowledge was derived at our hands, they shared with us morn and eve in the banquet of

God's daily heavenly bread, which he bestows in prayer; we all formed one family, and much resembled in constitution those nations in which the people look up for government to an hereditary priesthood, whom they reverence and love. They were a willing people, and we, I trust, a meek priesthood.

With these words, we reached his door, which was opened by an old domestic, who had served under him in India. The sight of him brought vividly to my mind all that my friend had been dwelling upon, for what I had seen of them both completely confirmed the doctrine which he had been laying down.

I.

THE DISCOVERY.

'Twas lovely June's departing day,
Still, silent as a dream,
At feverish noon all nature lay,
And scarce the kestryl cross'd my way
With wild discordant scream.

From morn, along a torrent's bed,
To eve my feet had run;
And now I stood where overhead
Gigantic hills deep shadow shed,
And screen'd me from the sun.

I sought a couch, and soon I found
A sward beside the rill,
And lo! the hawthorn rear'd around
Its boughs in bloom, and on the ground
The primrose blossom'd still.

Wondering I saw; for long ago
Had disappear'd from view
Their brethren of the vale below.
I sate: and leaning with my brow,
As wont, my moral drew.

Thus from the world's enervate throng
When wither'd, fall'n, decay'd,
The virtues have been vanish'd long,
And good men wept, and poet's song
Their vain recall essay'd.

The pilgrim whom his road may bear
To glen, or lonely wild,
Has found them still in blossom there,
In odour redolent and fair,
In colours undefil'd.

Oh! may at last my weary feet
Such resting-place attain,
Of antique manners the retreat,
Where honest bosoms still may greet
In words as frank and plain.

Where native dignity serene
The household may controul,
And free from heat and party-spleen,
Unfeign'd her tongue, unmask'd her mien,
Religion bind the whole.

II.

THE SERVANT.

I dream'd, and saw in glory clad, and crown'd
As with the sun, than brightest noon more bright,
The Son of Man; an army girt him round,
Bath'd in the dew of that most dazzling light,
That utter'd ever and anon
A joyous song, as he march'd on.
And, pointing to the radiant train he drew,
He ask'd, "wilt thou become my servant too?"

O'erpower'd and giddy with the excessive blaze,
Downward I hung in bashful awe my brow,
And ponder'd with myself in wild amaze.
O no! I cried, I am not dreaming now;
And then I look'd, and look'd again,
With growing rapture on the train,
Then prone on earth the glorious chief ador'd,
And cried, "yea, count me 'mid thy servants, Lord!"

I rose; the scene was chang'd, 'twas dim eclipse;
A cross stood opposite, where writh'd with pain
Hung one that spoke to me with quivering lips,
And, speaking, pointed to a little train
In rent and squalid garments drest,
That sobb'd, and cried, and beat the breast,
'Mid jeering multitudes a wretched few:
He ask'd, "wilt thou become my servant too?"

I gaz'd, and lo! the self-same form it seem'd
Which I had seen in dazzling glory flame.
I gaz'd again, and then I hop'd I dream'd;
Again, then cried it cannot be the same.
Then turn'd, lest one look more might show
Too clear what I was loth to know.
No man can serve two masters—thus I spoke,
Asham'd at my own answer, and awoke.

O double-minded servant of one Lord,
Is not thy life e'en such a dream as this?
Thou art not his 'mid cross, and shame, and sword:
But thou art his 'mid pomp, and wealth, and bliss.
Dull dreamer, up! arise, awake,
Thy silken bands of slumber break,
Thro' night the day, thro' death the life is given,
So thro' the opprobrious cross the glorious thrones of heaven.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FRIEND OF THE FAMILY.

This, said my friend, one day, as he opened a door at the head of the first flight of the broad oaken staircase of the manor-house, and discovered a spacious chamber, through whose mullioned window, partly blinded by the green leaves of a vine, the sun was shining most cheerfully, and throwing in fine relief the carving of the wainscotted sides and elaborate mantle-piece; this was known in our family by the title of "our friend's room." For here was lodged, whenever he came among us, he who was peculiarly reckoned the friend of the family; however full the house might be when he arrived, this room was always reserved for him. So completely was he identified as its occupant,

that in our childish minds this circumstance of possession formed a constant and leading point in our notion of him. He was of studious habits, and every morning in the colder months a fire was lighted at an early hour in that grate. Often on a cold winter's morn, when our own fire was scarcely sufficient to admit our shivering cowering crowd all to a due share of its warmth, I have stolen to his room, and shared with him the comforts of his hearth. He by no means disliked these visits, but rather said that he always enjoyed his studies the more when he had some one of us in his company: it gave him spirits, and we were extremely cautious against causing him any voluntary interruption further than by our mere presence. At intervals he would lay down his book, chatter with me for a few minutes, tell me a tale, cross-examine me good-humouredly in my book-learning, ask about my brothers, sisters, or companions, then resume his studies, and leave me in eager expectation of the next interval. At the moment that our bell rang for prayer, the creak of his opening door was heard, and his lively countenance with its benevolent smile imparted additional cheerfulness as he entered the room where we were assembled. We all found pleasure in his com-

pany, from oldest to youngest, from gravest to most playful, for he could adapt himself to either class, in such a manner, however, that neither the one ever complained of his levity, nor the other of his austerity.

Many, if not very many families, have some one friend thus distinguished above all the rest, who is reckoned peculiarly the friend of the family, and occupies often a nearer place in their confidence than their nearest relations out of doors. He is commonly the friend of the father's youth, his comrade at school and college, and grows dearer to him as the recollection of young and happy days becomes more pleasing with advancing years. He is a monument, and sort of representative of what is past, and seems to embody and keep upon earth what had otherwise long ago gone for ever. To the whole family he is the eye and chief organ, as it were, by which they become acquainted with the external world. He supplies them with information, is consulted on every difficulty, he is their help and comfort in sorrow and embarrassment; and to descend to his more trifling relations, he is to the children the agreeable channel of procuring them indulgences from their parents: he is their grand source of appeal in

all their disputes on matters beyond their own limited sphere of knowledge, the fountain of all their information regarding their future theatre of action, the world, and to his bosom the boys entrust with a solemnity which often overcomes his gravity, their whimsical predilections, and crude schemes for future life.

Great, indeed, is the importance of such a friend in every way, both for good and for bad; above all, in the moral and religious influence which he must necessarily exercise. He has been their father's intimate, and reflects his character to the children; if he have not grown wiser with advancing years, he may take away from their filial respect by impressing them with the notion that such was their father, whatever he may be now; and may lower at once their moral and religious standard, by allowing or rather inducing them to think that their father is exacting from them more duty than himself has paid, and that his interest, and not his love, is the cause of the strictness which he shews in himself, and requires from them. Fortunately, however, such a character can never occupy this important station with a tolerably wise and good father; and where he is otherwise, his friend (supposing friendship so firm to

exist in such acase) can do little to augment the overpowering evil of his own example.

But to a holy home, how wholesome is his influence. My father and his friend were yearly growing into still more intimate union, by the rare circumstance of the opinions of two men, both given to frequent study and deep reflection, and living in stirring times of controversy and canvass, civil and religious, not only continuing to agree as they advanced, but ever converging to a still closer union. This circumstance, in any case, is sufficient to establish a firm bond of friendship, but in the case of religion it furnishes one which may defy the powers of this world to dissolve. Their minds are in unison to their deepest recesses, to the very roots of all action, thought, and feeling; they seem as if brought together by God as suitable companions to the same spot in a world which admits not of chance or change, and all their intercourse is regulated by a purity and loftiness of sentiment (the genuine fruit of true religion) which is continually exciting their mutual admiration and love.

Such was he to my father, and I can scarcely adequately describe the light in which he was viewed by his children. They of course inhe-

rited his respect and love, and looked with no common feelings of regard upon one whose name was always mentioned in their family prayer, as if he had been one of themselves. But he came to our hearts in a still more important character; the ideas which children entertain of the attributes of God are necessarily derived from earthly representatives: and if a holy father furnish them with materials for forming a notion of the heavenly father, and, in proportion to his holiness and care, put them forward at once by his example in a more advanced starting-place, whence the mind comes more quickly and surely to the goal, and completes its notion; so, too, does a holy friend furnish, in a manner suited to their rude capacities, the attributes of our Lord and Master as a friend. His disinterested kindness as a friend, his steady affection, his ready ministration of help, his participation of our joy and our sorrow, his bosom, the chosen receptacle of our secrets; all this, in union with a holiness of character, which could not escape even our vague and childish appreciation of moral qualities, put us far (need I say?) on the way towards estimating that celestial attribute, and at once generated and nursed those feelings, which directed to-

wards God, and refined by this destination, become the only lasting and real source of earthly consolation.

Such was he to us, and came among us every successive year more and more dear, more and more sanctified in proportion, as from growing years we were better enabled to appreciate the purity of the fountain whence, in the first instance, we had drawn our notions; and even now when I can trace to him the germ of so many of my religious feelings and ideas, the rudiments of the unspeakable comfort which I have experienced in my reliance on God as a friend, I am almost ready to weep at the extent of the debt of reverence and gratitude which I feel to be owing to his memory.

His arrival among us always caused great joy and satisfaction; the expectation of it almost resembled the eve of a religious festival, and it was ushered in by a particular prayer for his safe conduct. In every society a new comer is welcome, from his breaking the monotonous round of thought and converse into which it is prone to fall. He imparts novelty and life, and like an additional chemical ingredient, compels all parts of the mass into fresh combinations. But in none is this interruption of the prevail-

ing mental routine more desirable than where religion has its proper influence. Thoughts are apt to be renewed in the same train till they cease to have due power in exciting the feelings, and words may be interchanged and repeated in the same circle, till they lose somewhat of the force of their adequate meaning, whence ensues a comparative languor and formality. If at any time we were approaching this state, we were most effectually roused from it by the visit of our friend, who, like the angel at Bethesda, stirred our stagnant pool into salubrious freshness. Indeed, I could sometimes indulge for a moment the idea that we were entertaining an angel, perhaps our guardian angel, for all his influence was benign and holy. We experienced on every communication with him something imparted to our minds, which we would fain not let go, and which we often discovered, after many a day, to have been the germ of some frame of mind in which we have found cause for pious delight and congratulation. Like an angel's, too, his visits, alas! became in course of time few and far between; age, with increasing infirmities, compelled him to keep to shorter distances: yet, when he did come, he made most ample compensation, and our now

fast ripening minds were able to appreciate the value of the intercourse, and zealous to draw from it all the advantages with which it was so teeming.

Whenever he went from us, he left aching hearts behind. For several mornings (I remember) after his departure, I would pass this door with a sigh, and even stay and look in, as almost hoping to see him, as usual, sitting at his fire. Never was "Amen!" more heartily pronounced than by all of us at the close of the prayer, in which my father prayed for his safe return, and thanking God for the blessings of the late visit, implored him to repeat the same in its due season.

He was about the same age as my father, and survived him by a few months; but even that short space of time was sufficient for him to exhibit proofs, by his kindness to us, of the zeal and permanency of his friendship.

Having had before my eyes, up even from my infancy, this model of a friend, you may suppose that I have neglected no means to acquire one for myself. But I have been less fortunate than my father. I have never yet found one who has realized my wishes. Perhaps the notion which I had conceived of friendship, being associated

with my happiest days, was refined in advancing years by time and absence into something too unearthly. Memory is ever too apt to drop the gross terrene substance, and present us but with the pure spirit; thus I became, perhaps, too fastidious, and expected to find in my first communication what can be the effect but of long years of friendship. Friends, in the common sense of the word, I have had many, and many, alas! have verified their proverbial fickleness. My consolation under the unkind desertion of such friends, I present you in these lines, written under its immediate smart.

THE ONLY FRIEND.

I have had friends, and thought them so,
Had friends both intimate and many,
But all have left me long ago,
Save the sole real friend of any:
His faith in dazzling contrast shows
All other friends but secret foes.

Had friends whom one unguarded speech,
Or one impatient look would scare,
Who sought occasion for a breach,
Inconstant as the passing air.
But this, impatient word or look
Could never scare—he ne'er forsook.

And friends whom never humblest call,
Nor meekest proffer brought again,
Tho' years had flown, and chang'd us all,
And nearer came the grave—'twas vain.
But this, be but a wish implied,
That instant combats at my side.

And friends, upon whose lips I hung,
And sweeter than the honey deem'd
The doctrine flowing from their tongue;
O fool, with bitterness it teem'd.
But all is true from this that flows,
His well of love no bitter knows.

And friends, who lock'd me to their breast,
Hid all from me their doubts and cares,
And I in turn my thoughts suppress,
My faults conceal'd, nor told them theirs.
But this has every thing reveal'd,
And I have nought from this conceal'd.

And friends, who when the feast was spread
Were ever nigh, and warm, and glowing;
But never shar'd my sorrow's bread,
And woe-cup full to overflowing.
But this, neglected in my joy,
In woe and pain is ever nigh.

And friends, who firm and constant stood,
Thro' woe and pain—and yet their aid
Was but to weep—'twas all they could—
And furnish hopes their hearts forbade.
But this, all woe, all pain can cure,
The hopes this gives are firm and sure.

And friends, whom regions far away,
For weary lagging years would sever,
Or some inexorable day
Tear from my clinging arms for ever;
But this, thro' either world survives,
Still nigh, still sure, for ever lives.

And who is this, thy best of friends,
What land contains a gem so rare?
His home of fadeless bliss extends
O'er earth, o'er ocean, and o'er air:
His rule around, above, below,—
O Lord, this best of friends art thou.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LIBRARY.

I HAVE already mentioned the Rector's library. I had frequently heard from old people accounts of its great extent. But as to persons of their class and attainments, even a moderate collection of books presents a most imposing appearance, seems, indeed, a perfectly inexhaustible fund of study, such reports are so exaggerated as to afford little clue to the real fact; much did I regret that it had been removed but a short time before my arrival. For, besides other reasons, I put much faith in the common observation that a man's collection of books gives us a key to his mind, and therefore looked for much insight into my predecessor's turn of thought from this inspection. I was, however, fortunate enough to see the "*disjecti membra*

poetæ," as it were, by beholding some fragments of it, whence I thought that I could form no inadequate notion of the whole. My friend had brought down with him for his summer companions the contents of a shelf or two; and they evidently belonged to a collection which had been made with great knowledge and discrimination. Even to this small portion, with my friend's kindness, I was much indebted; in its narrow compass it comprised volumes unattainable by my circumscribed means and remote situation, works of a very different character from those supplied by the subscription-library, or the book-club. With grateful recollections of the source of much sterling information, I often call to mind the apartment in which they lay. The ladder was remaining there still, and, while it shewed that the library in its flourishing days had pushed its shelves as near as they could approach the ceiling, seemed to jeer the scanty remnant, over which it towered in preposterous loftiness.

You are wondering what use I can make of that tall ladder, exclaimed my friend, one day, on observing my eyes fixed upon it. Useless as it may seem now, I exult much upon its recovery. I drew it from the bottom of a heap of

lumber, soon after my arrival, and never did relick-hunter dig up a more precious treasure. It is the most pleasing memorial of former days. When I look upon its polished shafts and worn steps, when I reflect upon the many journeys which myself and others have made up and down them, both for profit and pleasure, for you must know that it served us in a two-fold capacity, both as a road to knowledge, and as an instrument for feats of playful skill and bodily strength, (what will not boys turn to this purpose,) a thousand pleasing little circumstances, long buried in forgetfulness, revive in memory to amuse me. The vigour and pliability of muscle nurtured there, is, alas! gone, but the effect of the treasures of mind to which it conducted, I thank God, abides with me still. How little, then, did I calculate either on the loss of the one, or on the duration of the other. I now often beguile an idle quarter of an hour by looking at it, and allegorizing such little incidents as happen at the moment to strike my recollection. The difficulty and jostling on passing each other, on its narrow precipitous road, the severe falls and overthrow of all our freight, to which our hurry, carelessness, or ambition subjected us, the race and struggle amongst us up

its heights for some favorite book,—did not all these, methinks, shadow out much, very much, of what really occurs in the pursuit of knowledge on the stage of life? At another time, perhaps, I recall to mind the indescribable look of interest and curiosity which my father put on, when he saw one of us, putting all our young strength to the work, plant the ladder; how, with a glance stolen now and then, he would watch the part against which we placed it, observe the volume drawn forth, and I think I hear the hearty laugh with which he would hail our descent with a ponderous book, half the size of ourselves, and mark our looks of childish gravity and importance: and then again the renewed goodnatured laugh (which never deterred us) with which he looked at the contents of the book, apparently so unsuited to our years. Thus (how well do I remember it, as if it were yesterday,) he saluted me on the first time of my bringing down Drayton's Polyolbion, a work to which, child as I was, I grew strongly attached, in a manner unaccountable to me now; its legendary cast, no doubt, was one attraction, and other reasons were, perhaps, a geographical turn, and disposition for rambling, both of which have now been gratified to satiety,

thongh not in my native land; great part of that still remains invested with the romantic interest which the poet threw around it, and will remain, for I feel unwilling to dissolve the charm by an actual visit.

Unsuitable to our years as such books may at first sight appear, my father never took them out of our hands, nor remanded them to the shelf; he understood human nature better. He well knew that the peculiar and original bent of the child (if he have any character impressed at all) is often leading him to books from which the herd of grown-up people turn aside as uninteresting, or as being, at all events, out of the ordinary track of amusement; and to the mind of a reflecting parent, what can be more interesting than to watch such a choice? what, indeed, more gratifying? since it stamps to him the child's mind with a character at once. The father is henceforward enabled to see and clear the way before his child, and give full scope to that disposition which God has assigned for the foundation of his conduct through life, and thus, too, is saved all the misery, seldom terminated before death, of a constant struggle against natural inclination. Besides, when once discovered, an original bent gives the father's hand

a power of guidance, of which common-place minds do not allow: just such as the strong determined motion of the vessel supplies to the helmsman, whose skill is fruitlessly applied to a slow and placid course.

I now often pourtray to myself the high interest my father must have felt on seeing the different diverging roads on which our inclinations took us, as soon as the elementary acquirements, necessarily common to all dispositions, had been completed: how must our future destinations in life have forced themselves upon him, and how full of a fearful sense of responsibility must he have laid hold of that handle of guidance which God had put into his hands. With all this he reposed great confidence in us (at least appeared to repose) regarding the moral nature of the book which we selected: he had, indeed, by unwearied instruction, by continual impression of God's word upon our minds, imparted to them a quick and nice distinction between good and bad, and relied upon our choosing the one and rejecting the other; like the parent bird, who having taught her brood their appropriate meats, dismisses them into the wide regions of earth and sky to choose for themselves. He did not, therefore, officiously and ostentatiously

guide our choice, for that he knew would be to thwart it, to damp the ardour of curiosity by prescribing a task, and, above all, to deprive himself of the advantage of discovering our natural bias. But when I say this, I should, indeed, wrong him, were I to assert that he exercised over our reading no control whatever; much, and very much, was done gently, indirectly, and in a manner imperceptible to ourselves. He had made, as I have said, Scripture our well-head, and, this important point secured, the guiding of the stream was managed by means so easy as to be apparently inadequate to the important effects required. Have you ever traced one of our first-rate rivers to its source? Then you cannot fail to have observed, how here a slight projection of rock has forced it to take an elbow, and saved it from the fate of a noisy brawling feeder to the nearest lake; and how there another obstacle, equally insignificant, has delivered it from being a nameless tributary to an obscure stream; and thus a series of causes, each apparently trifling when compared with the consequences, has ultimately shaped its course into a channel, which taking the sweep of rich and wide plains, and winding under the walls of historic towns and capital cities, sup-

plies at last a haven for the commerce of the world, crowded and studded for many a mile with masts, sails, and flags, its joyous symbols.

But was not such reading too desultory? you will now ask. I think not. In following our natural inclinations we were following a certain train, and I am now speaking rather of amusement than of study. But is not our knowledge of the world around us formed, more especially in our younger days, in the most desultory manner possible; taken up, I may say, from the very hands of chance, two successive hours scarcely ever presenting us with the same lesson? The knowledge which abides by children, and assimilates itself, as it were, with the thoughts and affections, is ever thus desultory, pursued by inclination or accident, and never upon plan, which implies a stage of reason to which they have not attained. In this manner, which is precisely the same as that in which the baby becomes aequainted with this strange world, we also were making our acquaintance with the social world beyond us. We were learning like the young soldier, by exercise and mockfights, and not by actual engagement. In the volumes which we took up, the history of our species presented itself, the character of

man was unfolding, the general movements of life were displaying, bodies of men, combination of purposes, results of long premeditated design, were exhibiting themselves; thus we were daily becoming better prepared to take our several posts in real conflict.

It is now no unfrequent amusement of mine to turn over the volumes which were the favorites of my boyhood, and though it is but here and there that I meet with a passage which I can distinctly remember to have interested me, yet the comparison of past with present feelings is full of interest. How very much do I find, of what then must have been to me quite speculative and imaginary, to have been now completely realized; how much that must then have been unintelligible, to be now, alas! but too intelligible; how many lines and expressions which must then have fired my fancy, do I now pass over with cold indifference; and how many beauties now strike me, to which at that age I must have been insensible. Such passages, therefore, at this day come before me invested with somewhat of the dignity of prophecy; their obscurities have been cleared up, their high-wrought language reduced to fact,

their predictions have been accomplished. My collection here you see is but small: selected, however, as it has been, I find it quite sufficient. Owing to the continual change of feeling produced by this life of constant chance and change, I never find the same set of authors tire; and this more especially here, where, from a varied country, and the incessant revival of associations, my mind is never stagnant and passive. As a well diversified landscape ever presents some novelty through the longest life, owing to the infinite number of different combinations of light and shade of which it is capable, so is it with my favorite authors—their perusal supplies me with unlimited variety from the ever-shifting state of my feelings and memory, the latter of which has cloud and sunshine in abundant store to produce. At other times I take up a book, which I remember to have been a favorite of a brother or sister, and make my way through it as I do among the neighbouring walks which are associated with their memory; often I am struck upon comparing particular passages with circumstances developed in their after life, and flatter myself with having discovered some germ of their principles, together

with the passages to which they were most attached. Thus I seem to have improved my intimacy with those blessed spirits.

And now, my dear friend, what is the result, you will ask, of all my knowledge, acquired through a long life, of men, and of books? Is it nothing more than the vulgar selfish enjoyment of possession, or is it the more generous pleasure arising from the consciousness of being able to impart amusement and instruction to others? It is neither one nor the other, though I mean not to say that I do not experience the latter. In brief, I answer, that it is the clear understanding of God's word; this is my recompense, and a most liberal one it is. That volume has been daily putting off somewhat of the theoretical cast which want of acquaintance with the heart, and ignorance of the world to which it is addressed, throws more or less around it. Having seen deeper and deeper into the disease which it presupposes, I have become more and more able to value the remedy which it applies. As long as our view is confined to the body of a flame, we can neither estimate its intensity, nor appreciate its use: for this object we must take in the dark back ground, mark it gradually growing into light, see the many

projections which catch the rays, and the many deep recesses into which they penetrate. Such a back ground to the light of the gospel is human knowledge, including the utter darkness of the Gentile, and the more enlightened speculations of the Christian philosopher; and to this view, thus commanding, my contemplations, methinks, daily more and more approximate. O blessed privilege of advanced years! O more than full compensation for all that they take away! Like the soldier, on the eve of striking his tent, and marching far away, I feel that I have collected all my mind's furniture together, that all my spoil is in readiness to accompany me. O delightful result! to gather up the sum of our knowledge, and be enabled to give it bearing towards that point whither we ourselves are tending, to find that we have conferred upon our acquisitions a principle of immortality, by having made them minister to our understanding of the everlasting word, that thus not a day, not an hour, not a minute, has been lost in the pursuit, and that thus we shall carry our treasure with us out of the world; while, to the last moment of existence, fresh wants of man are perceived with fresh mercies of God to meet them, goodness and wisdom

are assuming more palpable substance, the tangled maze of Providence is unravelling, the counsels of the everlasting are unfolding, his promises are fast accomplishing, his prophecy is brightening.

MEDITATION IN A LIBRARY.

What is all knowledge but the dross
  Which spirits pure have left behind?
What but the slough, terrene, and gross,
  Cast by regenerated mind?
    Thus as I look,
    Cries every book,
And at each glance methinks I roam
Amid a mental catacomb.

Lo! letter'd coffins close me round,
  Where, by quick mind abandon'd long,
Thoughts in their bandages are bound,
  Tier pil'd on tier, a sepulchred throng.
    Of every time,
    Of every clime,
The wit of nations round me lies,
Slumbering before my gazing eyes.

Stamp'd in obtrusive gold their name,
  Sad mockery! lost empires preach:
Chiefs, statesmen, kings, condemn'd to fame,
  Apostate saints, fall'n churches teach.

In wildering heap
Incessant leap
Fear, wonder, from each titled roll,
And fasten on my fearful soul.

Stands not another Babel here,
Where spirits in their pride have wrought
Their heaven-affronting towers to rear
Amid the boundless plains of thought?
For ages dumb
Strange speeches come,
And in bewildering din unite,
With those which blest this morning's light.

See, World! the builders of thy pride,
The masons of thy folly here;
And Heaven is present to deride!
Their speech is lost to living ear.
For wondering crowd,
For plaudit loud,
The study of a silent few
Is all their meed, is all their due.

Here stands thy sage my eyes before,
Who sought on thy polluted race
The lustral waves of Heaven to pour,
To mould anew to shapes of grace
The mind deform:
Poor eloquent worm!
He wrote, and liv'd, and died—and man
Proceeded as he first began.

Here he thy froward sons that lash'd,
Thy satirist, with gibing grin,
Who whipp'd, unaw'd and unabash'd,
In others his own darling sin.
He too is gone,
And man walks on,
Surviving with undying wrong
His scourger's fury and his song.

And here thy bard, whose thrilling lay
Stirr'd to high deeds thy wayward son,
Pointed to glory's starry way,
And woo'd and fondly deem'd he won.
His song was vain,
It swells the train
That rolls along from ages past,
Each song as fruitless as the last.

And here thy grave historians stand,
And down to each succeeding age
The roll of by-gone days expand;
Vain is their warning, vain their page.
They but unfold
A tale thrice told,
Thrice to be told by speech unborn,
Thrice to be heard with heedless scorn.

E'en thus from shelf to shelf I roam,
Still ending as I first began,
Till to that titled roll I come,
"The covenant renew'd with man."

Around it stand
A saintly band,
Its honest preachers, who unfurl'd
Its ensign 'mid a faithless world.

Yea, Lord! and girt with such a train,
So pure, so goodly, and so bright,
Thou shalt in glory come again,
Clad in intolerable light.
And at thy seat,
I must repeat,
What from these treasur'd cells I drew,
What gain'd from all that crowds my view.

Ah! idled moments, mis-spent hours,
Days, months, that unimprov'd have flown!
Now, now I feel my wasted powers,
And know how much I might have known.
The abandon'd prize
Now mocks my eyes,
In vain I sorrow o'er the past,
My die of ignorance is cast.

Lord! make me humble thus to learn
My scanty wealth, and seek for more:
Watchful thy seasons to discern,
Faithful to guard the entrusted lore:
Content to pause
Where wisdom draws
Her limit: quick to truth's high call,
And thankful, blessed Lord! for all.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUSION.

On a beautiful morning late in October, I walked to my church upon occasion of some weekly duty. I was earlier there than necessary, and invited by the genial sunshine, proceeded towards the stone seat which I have already mentioned as set up by the late Rector. There I found my friend sitting, and enjoying the warmth of the situation. I am attending, he said, to my father's monitor, and never have I found it so impressive before; for besides the joint admonition of the dial and waterfall, the one casting its ever-varying shadow, the other glancing in ceaseless succession under the beams of this bright sun, here is the tall ash which he planted, shedding at my feet its sear and rustling leaf at every breath of wind, and the robin perched

upon one of the nearly leafless and rimy sprays, is trilling forth a long farewell to sunny seasons. These are importunate monitors, and I seem in them almost to hear my father's voice. At all events, I must now soon expect my summons, and have accordingly, like a steward going to his account, been summing up in my mind what I have received, and how spent. On the side of receipt, I have been reckoning his several blessings of having, first of all, planted me in the church of his blessed Son, next assigned my fair lot in a pure and holy portion of that church, and again in the purest part of that portion, in a godly home; and now I am endeavouring to find what I have to set against the opening of the account. O, my friend, I can find nothing, positively nothing. He then leaned his brow on his hands, and continued for a few moments in silence. Shortly after, he looked up, and resumed. I have latterly taken a more than usual pleasure in visiting this churchyard: it becomes daily more congenial with my feelings. It was also, I have understood, a favorite walk of my father's, when the infirmity of his declining years compelled him to a narrow circuit. Perhaps, my walk may shortly be equally circumscribed. Could I find a spot more inter-

esting, more copious in the suggestions proper to old age? I delight to repeat here some lines which I have found of his.

> Upon the mounded surface as I tread,
> That waves in billows o'er the cavern'd dead,
> I seem to walk a sea, which every hour
> Threatens to yawn asunder and devour.
> And he, the sinking Peter who upbore,
> Upbears me now—I tremble and adore.

After this he rose up, took my arm, and entered with me into the church. He gazed intently and silently on the family tablet, then rousing himself, and seeming, by one effort, to shake off an unreasonable despondency, he cheerfully took my hand, and quitted me with the offer of another ramble in the course of the week.

Undoubtedly he was haunted by some foreboding of his approaching end. He felt, perhaps, as aged people towards their end often do, something unusual about him, which was sufficient to awaken him to such reflections, and to look in the face the worst which may happen, but yet not important enough to communicate to others, whom it may needlessly alarm, and bring around him in troublesome officiousness. Two days passed, and I began to expect a sum-

mons to our intended walk, when I was shocked towards evening by a hurried message, announcing his death. He had been (it seems) that morning, as if the same unaccountable foreboding still lay upon his mind, to visit his brother's tree. He returned later, and more fatigued than usual, though he did not extend his walk beyond the spot, but lay under its shade for full an hour, as I learned from the farmer who was ploughing at the time in the field below. Arrived in his usual sitting room, he threw himself back upon his sofa, and seemed to fall almost instantly into a sound slumber. From that slumber he never awoke! I conceive that the length and number of his rambles was too great for his years; and the continual excitation of feeling produced by reviewing the scenes of his youth, was too much for the mind of an old man, which requires calmness, if not indifference, in order to maintain its union with the exhausted and torpid body.

The long monumental tablet in the chancel is now filled up; their roll of death is complete; and, I trust, that their book of life has not a single name omitted. My eye now no longer adheres to the first name, but after a gaze passes on at once to the last, and there rests in melancholy contemplation. I seldom withdraw it

before, with tears in my eyes, I thank God for the blessing so unexpectedly bestowed on me in the possession, short-lived though it was, of such a friend. Alas! it is now almost the only trace left of him upon earth; for the walk from the Manor-house gate to the chancel-door, which he had restored and neatly gravelled, is now again nearly obliterated by rank tufts of grass, the windows which he had opened are again blocked up, and what is worse than all, the woodman's axe is at this moment sounding in his favorite walnut-grove. A distant relation, who never saw him, has succeeded to his earthly inheritance; and his brother's oak, I fear, is protected from a similar fate more by its youth than any knowledge of what it commemorates. So passes away all that we love, reverence, and would fain twine ourselves around in this world!

A handsome escutcheon, suspended over the portico, mocks the dilapidated Manor-house; but nothing beyond the mere filling up of the tablet, so often mentioned, adorns his memory in the church. I think that the last member of an ancient family, whose influence had been all along so beneficial to the parish, ought to have had some further mark on his tomb, if it was only like the line we draw across a list to shew

where a class terminates. Two lines had been sufficient. For want of such an epitaph to produce, I present my reader with one of my own composition, (observe, I am no poet,) which I have written underneath his profile, a remarkable likeness, which he gave me not many days before his death. This I have glazed and framed in black, and hung over my chimney-piece.

EPITAPH.

Last of a gallant troop that fought and died,
Last passenger that press'd the parting tide,
Last guest that quitted life's protracted feast,
Last captive from the dungeon's gloom releas'd,
Last deer of all the herd to slaughter due,
Last spark which the consuming taper threw,
Last swallow in autumnal noon-day seen,
Last flower that painted the decaying green,
Last drop that glitter'd in the exhausted well,
Last sand that in the waning hour-glass fell,
Last fruit that linger'd on life's drooping tree,
Last star that sank beneath the darkling sea,
Last lonely remnant of a numerous home,
He sleeps in peace, and waits the morn to come.

The recalling to mind my past conversation with him, and arranging and recording in some connected order the instruction which I have received, has been to me ever since both a study and amusement, the employment of some hours

stolen from sleep, and of some melancholy leisure. In order to refresh fading impressions, I often revisit the spots which were scenes of interesting communication, and this has led me to describe them, perhaps more at length, than they may seem to deserve. I have, indeed, no reason to expect that I shall have been able to communicate more than but a slight share of the interest which I have taken, or to infuse into my reader more than a slight portion of the beneficial influence which I have been enjoying, who feel as if I had in a journey through a country of beautiful sights and sweet smells, shaken off the sooty films of a close contaminated city.

If my book savour of melancholy, I confess that it does so from intention. I speak not to the gay; one of my leading objects throughout has been to uphold to view the rich and glorious fund of consolation which our blessed religion has in store for those manifold afflictions to which a family is more subject in proportion to the strength of the mutual love and affection of its members. To such I could wish to be an useful monitor. I do not hope to aspire to be a guide. I have myself had some experience; and, though few of those who have journeyed through the Vale of Tears have surveyed it so calmly as to

be enabled to furnish a road-book, yet, who is there, of common sensibility, upon whom its features have not left a deep and indelible impression?

I think it just possible, as ever so little things often call to recollection what are truly great, as a sparrow-hawk will prompt the thought of an eagle, that this book may remind thee, O Reader, in part of its plan, of that holy work, "The Temple," of the divine Herbert. I confess that I had him at first in view, and once, while yet my plan more nearly approached his, had determined to give it the title of "The Second Temple;" and this, from a fond admiration of his work, not from any notion of the worthiness of my own; much on the same principle as we impose the names of celebrated worthies on the infant members of our family, which, while they proclaim our fervent approbation of their glorious deeds, serve to express, what otherwise we shrink from expressing even to ourselves, a lurking and undefined hope that the possessor of the name may be possessor of the virtues also. Perhaps, indeed, the title, thoroughly considered, may seem more expressive of humility than of presumption. For how glorious was the first temple in comparison with

the second. The first was decked with the ensigns and relics of the brightest period of the nation's history; it had the glory, the cherubim, the budding-rod, and the manna-pot: the second was destitute of all. The first rose under the hands of a powerful and magnificent monarch · the second was put together by miserable exiles, returning fresh from the dungeons of captivity. The first was reared amid shouts of joy and exultation: the second rose amid tears and weeping. Even so does this my volume want all the divine glory of that of Herbert. It possesses nor mark nor relic of better days. It is the work of one, not glorious, like him, in all the praise of the gospel, but of one bearing the bruises of the manacles and fetters of sin; and its erection, far from drawing from thee, O Reader, a cry of admiration, will rather call forth tears at so unequal an attempt to revive the glories of past and better times.

Yes! very much, I am but too well aware, will require kind indulgence. But as in a procession, whose long and motley array ushers in at length the desired wonder and delight of our eyes, we regard, with a favorable look, its very humblest components; so, in the train of thought which pervades this volume, if it shall have

introduced to thee, in the end, an object worthy and approved by thy bosom, may it incline thee to overlook whatever is poor, whatever is feeble, in consideration of its wearing the trappings of a grateful service, of its being among the harbingers of a welcome presence.

Farewell! I have at least done my best; and to the humblest endeavour, if it be but the best, there is never wanting the blessing of some good; truly not in vain will have been my undertaking, if the foregoing pages shall have suggested or recalled one train of holy thought, infused or revived one feeling of pure affection, inspired or confirmed one good resolution; and great indeed will be my reward, if this my little book shall have moved thee to raise, still more have assisted thee in raising, the most glorious edifice the hand of a Christian can raise to the honour and glory of his Master, the edifice of a HOLY HOME.

THE END.

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